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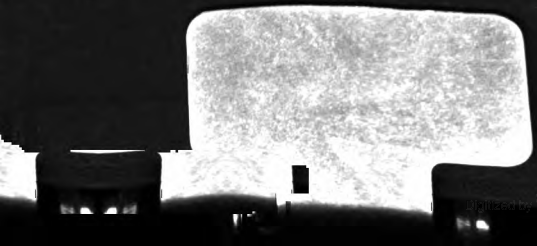
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The life of blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez, lay-brother ...

Henry Foley

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LIFE OF
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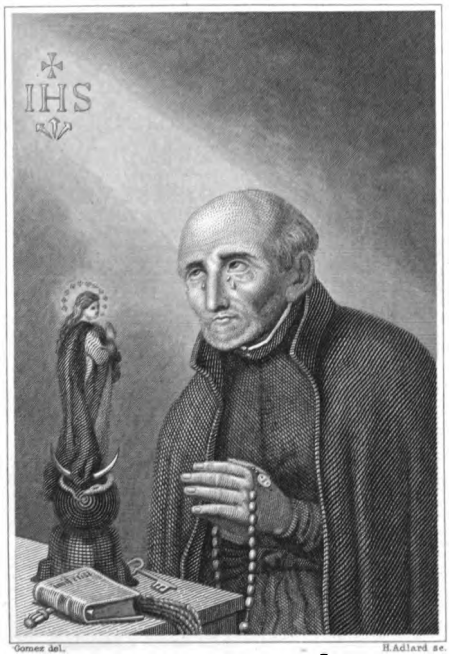
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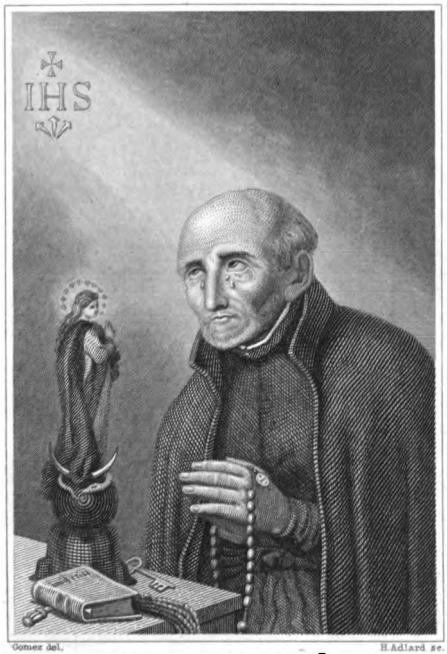
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THE LIFE OF

BLESSED ALPHONSUS RODRIGUEZ.

LAY-BROTHER OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

BY A

LAY-BROTHER OF THE SAME SOCIETY.

H. Foley.

Mitis et humilis Corde.





LONDON: BURNS AND OATES.

1873.

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TO THE

LAY-BROTHERS AND SISTERS

OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

IN THE CHURCH CATHOLIC,

THIS LIFE OF A

LAY-BROTHER OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

IS DEDICATED

BY ONE OF THEMSELVES.

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PREFACE.

THE Life of this great servant of God and true child of St. Ignatius, which we now offer to the public, has been compiled from the following sources—(1) A Life written in French by a Father of the Society of Jesus, a translation of which was published many years ago by Messrs. Richardson, at the instance of his Eminence the late Cardinal Wiseman (at that time Coadjutor Bishop of the Midland District), and (2) from a short but well-authenticated Life of the saint written by another Father of the Society, with the authority of the Very Reverend Father General, Vincent Caraffa. This latter was translated, many years ago, into English by the late Father John Haggerty, S.J., but never printed. (3) In addition to the information obtained from these sources, a few extracts have been made from the *Life of the Blessed*

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Peter Claver, S.J., published by the Fathers of the Brompton Oratory, relating particularly to the connection between our saint and that glorious Apostle of the Negroes, of whom the Blessed Alphonsus may be truly called the Spiritual Father, inasmuch as he was the instrument in the hands of God by which Claver was formed for that arduous apostleship. The whole has been compared with the Acts of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, in the solemn process of the saint's Beatification and Canonization.

This Life is recommended to the study of all Religious persons of both sexes and of every grade; but it will be read with especial interest and profit by those who have been called to the humbler state of Lay-brother or Sister, of whom Blessed Alphonsus may be considered the patron and model, and to whose number the writer of this Life belongs. In it they will find a mine of the richest treasure, pearls of great price, a most perfect and most simple example of every virtue special to their calling, but more particularly of holy and blind obedience, which was the characteristic virtue of Alphonsus. This virtue was declared by

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our holy Father St. Ignatius in his famous letter on obedience (quoting the words of St. Gregory the Great), to be "*the only virtue which plants all other virtues in the soul, and preserves them when planted.*" It was by this, the parent and preserver of all virtues, and by his simplicity and vigour in embracing in all things, great and small, the will of God manifested to him by his Superiors, whose voice he regarded as that of God, as also by his constant, steady, and persevering self-denial, love of humiliation, and hatred of himself, that Alphonsus attained to a degree of sanctity so eminent as to be deemed worthy of the honours of the altar, and to be ranked among the Saints of the Church.

None need be discouraged by reading the account of the virtues of Alphonsus, or say, "I cannot attain to this; such virtue is too high *for me.*" The opportunities and methods of practising humility, obedience, and mortification are so various, that every one may attain to a very high degree of virtue in that sweet and pleasant way. All that is needed for this is prayer for the divine grace, and a goodwill and generous resolution to cooperate with that

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grace in taking up the Cross daily and following the footsteps of our crucified Lord and Master.

Pope Leo XII., in his Brief for the Beatification of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, proposes him to the veneration of the Faithful especially as an example of humility and obedience, for which virtues he was remarkably distinguished, and he is a remarkable instance of the fulfilment of that divine decree, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Alphonsus had all the qualifications which might have prompted him to aspire to the priesthood, yet his humility led him to offer himself to God in the lowly grade of a Lay-brother, and God, in return, opened to him His mystical wine cellars, not only raising him to the most sublime degree of contemplation, but gave him the power of communicating the divine secrets to others, of guiding souls to salvation and sanctification, and forming them in heroic virtue. The prayer of the humble man bows the heavens, and is irresistible with God: it draws God down into his soul, and removes all the obstacles to the action of divine grace, while it admits him as a disciple to the school of the Holy Ghost, the best of all professors in the "science of the Saints." As

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charity is the virtue by which the soul of man tends to, and is united to, God as its last end, Christian perfection is charity, and he that has perfect charity is a perfect Christian. And although, in the strictest sense, perfect charity cannot be found upon the earth, and we must look for its realization in our eternal home, yet, in a true and proper, though larger sense, the charity of the Saints may be said, even in this life, to be perfect. The charity of Alphonsus was so heroic, his love of God so pure and disinterested, that, as is usually the case with virtue which, in a notable degree, transcends the ordinary standard of human excellence, it was the object of suspicion and obloquy during his life. He was ordered by his Religious Superiors to commit to writing an account of that charity which he practised and recommended to others, and in the process of his Canonization this written account was tested by the severest scrutiny of the promoters of the Faith. His account was found to contain three parts. In the first he expresses the gladness and joy of a soul imbued with this charity by reason of which it seeks to please God, and devotes itself perpetually—"night

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and day"—to the investigation of the means of pleasing God. In the second he describes himself as so affected by this charity as to lose all recollection, both of his eternal happiness and the pains of hell. In the third he professes his soul, imbued with the aforesaid charity, to have excluded all consideration of his own interest, that is to say, of the reward of eternal glory.

It was objected, by the revisors of the case, that this description of charity was incompatible with the theological virtue of hope, that it savoured of "quietism," and came within the terms of a proposition condemned by Pope Innocent XII.* But the theologians of the Sacred Congregation triumphantly proved, not only that the statements of Alphonsus were entirely free from the censure of the condemned proposition in question, and every other, but that they described a charity heroic in degree and an act of the purest and most disinterested

* "Datur habitualis status Amoris Dei, qui est Charitas, pura, et sine ullâ mixtione proprii interesse. Nec timor pœnarum nec desiderium remunerationum habet ampliùs in eo partem. Non amatur ampliùs Deus propter meritum, nec propter perfectionem, nec propter felicitatem in eo amando inveniendam" (*Propositio damnata à san. mem. Innocentio XII. de anno* 1699).

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love of God. And they went on to establish the identity of the theology of the illiterate Lay-brother on this point with that of St. Francis de Sales,* St. Thomas Aquinas,† and Cardinal Pallavicino.‡

Another characteristic of the Blessed Alphonsus was a personal and childlike devotion to our Lord and His Blessed Mother, with whom He conversed with a familiarity, as this history records, "such as is wont to unite friends with one another, or rather with an affection like that of a child for its parents"—and indeed, as such he always regarded them—an affection which they rewarded by frequently favouring him by their corporal presence and other marvellous graces. So intense was his devotion to the Passion of our Divine Redeemer, that he was permitted even to participate in those excruciating pains which pierced the Sacred Hearts

* "Il sovrano motivo delle nostre azzioni, che è quello dell' Amor celeste, ha questa sovrana proprieta, che essendo più puro, rende più pura l'azzione, che ne procede," &c. (*S. Francis de Sales*, lib. v., cap. 13).

† *Secunda Secundæ*, quæst. xix., art. 10.

‡ "Il buon Christiano dopo aver' acquistati gli abiti virtuosi, l'Amor dell' onesto, il desiderio del Paradiso, la Carità verso Dio, somma bontà, e liberal fonte d'ogni suo bene, etc.—non è scosso, e travagliato dallo spavento dell' Inferno," &c. (Cardinal Pallavicino, *Della Perfezzione Cristiana*, lib. i., cap. 10).

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of the Mother and Son. In spirit Alphonsus was constantly at the foot of the Cross, and in his perfect detachment from self and the world, he beheld in the death of his Divine Lord the end and death of all created things in regard to himself.

His seraphic devotion to the adorable Sacrament of the Altar was rewarded by a multitude of favours, bestowed upon him by our Blessed Lord before the Tabernacle, and especially at the time of Mass and Holy Communion. That infinite abyss of divine love was the source of all his strength, and the principle of his soul's life. To his spirit the Divine Prisoner of the Tabernacle was ever present as the King of Kings in His glory, surrounded by the Court of Heaven, and the soul of Alphonsus was filled with amazement at beholding the Lord of Majesty hidden, and as it were annihilated, upon a million altars, for the love of His creature, man, whose ingratitude and coldness pierced His tender heart with the deepest affliction. We read that our Lord would frequently withdraw from the soul of His servant that mysterious veil which hides His Divine Majesty from our sight, and receive him into

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those inner chambers that are unknown to our senses, in which his soul, melting away within him, was lost in the vast ocean of love.

No ordinary devotion to our Blessed Lady's Immaculate Conception would be remarkable in a Spaniard, but that of Alphonsus to this mystery was quite singular. He saw, by divinely infused knowledge, that great doctrine, now declared to be an article of faith, to be the complement of the crown of Mary's prerogatives, and he did not hesitate to assert that one of the objects for which the Society of Jesus had been founded was the propagation and defence of the dogma. He was no less devout to the mystery of the Assumption, and this history relates some of the marvellous favours which were the reward of his devotion. His other virtues; his humility; his constant recollection in the Divine Presence; his heroic patience; his love of holy poverty; his charity to the poor and sick; his ardent zeal and predilection for sinners; his esteem for his Religious vocation; his veneration for his Order, its members, and its holy Founder; his admirable gift of prayer and his instructions concerning it; and finally, his infused knowledge of spiritual

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things; are recorded in due order in the course of this life.

None will be surprised to find that one who had attained to such great virtue and heroic sanctity should have become the chosen temple of the Holy Ghost, and been endowed by Him with every supernatural gift.

To those also whose vocation it is to sanctify themselves in the world, the life of the Blessed Alphonsus will be full of interest and instruction, inasmuch as for the first thirty-seven years of his life he was actively engaged in business, and in the married state. Whatever is instructive and edifying to a Religious, is so in a secondary degree to those living in the world, who, although they are not actually bound by the golden cord of Religion, are equally called to perfection in their own state of life.

What a contrast does the life of this great servant of God present to that of the votaries of the world! While all the world's pleasures, and riches, and honours, pass away like a dream, and its greatest heroes and heroines are no more remembered, or merely leave a barren name on the page of history, this humble Lay-brother, who spent his life in poverty, contempt, and

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self-abnegation and mortification, is now venerated on the altars of the whole Christian Church, and exalted to the highest honours that Heaven and earth can bestow.

MANRESA HOUSE, ROEHAMPTON.
Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, 1873.

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THE LIFE

OF

BLESSED ALPHONSUS RODRIGUEZ.

BOOK I.

God, Who is admirable in His Saints, is often pleased to hide from the eyes of man the most heroic virtues of His servants, in order to environ them afterwards with a glory so much the purer, as it only commences at their death. Such has been the conduct of Providence with regard to the Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez, a Religious of the Society of Jesus, whose life was very obscure in the sight of men, and whom the Head of the Church has chosen amongst a concourse of personages, illustrious for their sanctity and great actions, to place him in the ranks of the Blessed, having been beatified by His Holiness Pope Leo XII. on the 12th June, 1825. His Canonization, together with that of his spiritual child, Blessed Father Peter Claver, the Apostle of the Negroes, has now been announced, and is expected to be solemnized in the course of the coming year.

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Segovia, a famous city in Spain, was the birthplace of Alphonsus. He was born on the 25th of July, 1531, a day consecrated to the memory of St. James the Apostle, whilst St. Ignatius was pursuing his studies in the University of Paris. His father, Diego Rodriguez, an upright merchant, and his mother, Maria Gomez, lived honourably by commerce, though they had to maintain a numerous family, consisting of seven sons and four daughters. Being fervent Christians, they brought up the young Alphonsus with the greatest care, and from his infancy he manifested evident signs of his future extraordinary sanctity. He evinced an innate and powerful inclination to virtue, and a most tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, whose honour was dear to this child of benediction, even before he was capable of appreciating its excellence; from the earliest age he was observed to seize with eagerness on her images, and to kiss them with the tenderest devotion; he pressed them to his heart, and they could not be taken from him without causing him to shed tears. On one occasion, when not quite four years of age, perceiving a picture of her whom he already looked upon as his good Mother, and regarding it with the utmost affection, he addressed her in the language of filial confidence, saying, with childlike simplicity, "Oh, if you knew how much I love you! You do not love me so well as I love you." Scarcely had he pronounced these words, when the most holy Virgin, whose motherly affection could be restrained no longer, appearing to him in a sensible

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manner, and casting a look of tenderness on him, made him this sweet response: "What do you say, my son? The love that I bear you is so great, that yours can never equal it." He manifested the greatest joy at the very mention of her sweet name, and whenever he saw or found a piece of paper with her holy name upon it, he would put it into his bosom, and treasure it like a precious relic. He was often observed in his childhood to be completely absorbed in some deep trance or absence of mind; in this state, with his eyes unusually open and fixed, as if gazing on some wonderful vision, his body motionless, he would suddenly cry out and call upon the Blessed Virgin. His parents, on these occasions, could scarcely by the most violent efforts rouse him and bring him again to himself.

He was twelve years of age when two Fathers of the Society of Jesus passed through Segovia, and were hospitably entertained at the house of Diego Rodriguez, his father. These Religious having retired for some days into the country to pass them in retreat and recollection, the young Alphonsus followed them there, and learned in his conversations with them several practices of piety, amongst other that of the Rosary, to which he continued singularly devoted during his life. Soon afterwards he was sent to Alcala to study, where he remained only a year. Another account says that he studied humanities and rhetoric for two years in Valencia, leading a most exemplary life in all modesty and devotion. His father dying

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in his absence, his mother recalled him home to assist her in the embarrassments occasioned by her widowhood. She married him to a virtuous young person named Maria Luazez, and he continued the business of his father, which was that of a draper. He lived in this state, attentive to his business, but still more so to the interests of his soul, never failing to attend punctually at every divine office and service in the church, and regularly to frequent the Sacraments. But God, desirous of raising him to a more exalted degree of sanctity and perfection, gradually freed him from the obstacles which yet impeded him. His fortune was destroyed by repeated reverses, and more overwhelming misfortunes soon overtook him; death deprived him of his young daughter, whom he loved tenderly, and he soon after lost his wife, who left him a son yet very young. His mother then retired to an apartment of his house with her daughters, Julienne and Antoinette, who both made vows of virginity, and attained afterwards to an eminent degree of sanctity. As for Alphonsus, he lived with his son in another apartment, and thus united, they persevered in the practice of all Christian virtues.

He began this new life by a general confession, which he made to Father Martinez, a Religious of the Society of Jesus, with a torrent of tears, which flowed almost uninterruptedly during three years of the most rigorous penance. Entirely occupied with satisfying the Divine Justice, he joined to the most lively sentiments of compunction, fasts, haircloths, disciplines,

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and all the austerities which a holy indignation against himself inspired. He often approached the Sacraments of Penance and the most Blessed Eucharist, and prepared himself for them by an almost perpetual prayer, which consisted especially in the fervent recital of the Rosary. He did not perform this holy exercise as a matter of form, pronounced hastily and without recollection of mind; he meditated and relished in his heart the divine mysteries of our holy faith, the chief object of this devotion, whilst his lips repeated the admirable words of the Lord's Prayer and the Angelical Salutation.

The Lord was pleased to testify by a miraculous favour how agreeable this practice was to him. Every time that he recited the *Pater noster* he saw a fine red rose appear, and at each *Ave* the same flower seemed to him resplendent with whiteness; it appeared as it were a sweet blooming crown, which he offered to the Queen of Heaven, and which was a symbol of the fervour of his prayer. It was thus that our Saint attained, by degrees, that high spirit of contemplation, of which the assiduous recital of the Rosary was the principal foundation. This grace accorded to the piety of Alphonsus was soon followed by a second and more signal one, with which it pleased his Divine Master to recompense the long and rigorous penance of His servant. One night that the fervent penitent experienced extraordinary sentiments of contrition, and wept bitterly for his faults, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him, surrounded by a blessed

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band of Saints, amongst whom he recognized St. Francis of Assisi, towards whom he had always a particular devotion. This glorious Patriarch, approaching him, asked the cause of so profound a grief. "O my holy protector!" cried Alphonsus, "a single venial sin would merit the tears of an entire life, and you ask me why I weep." Our Lord manifested His approval of this reply, and cast on the happy Alphonsus a look of divine love, which filled him with the sweetest consolation. The vision suddenly disappeared, but not so its effects, for from that moment his heart became deeply impressed with an extreme horror of sin and hatred of himself. It was about this period that God inspired him with the idea of devoting himself entirely to meditation on the mysteries of the life and death of Jesus Christ. The sufferings of our Divine Redeemer in His bitter Passion touched in a sensible manner the heart of Alphonsus. He often represented Him in his mind, sometimes crowned with thorns, bathed in blood, exposed to the gaze of the multitude by the Roman President, saying these words—"Behold the Man;" sometimes loaded with a heavy Cross, and meeting His Blessed Mother plunged in inexpressible affliction; at other times suspended on the gibbet of the Cross, and a prey to mortal agony.

He remained in spirit at the foot of the Cross with the afflicted Virgin Mother of God, and experienced, through the fervour of his love, some of those excruciating pains which pierced the Hearts of the Mother

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and Son. Our Lord not only permitted that the soul of His servant should experience a lively sentiment of His sorrows, but He was pleased that the impression should be communicated to his body, so that Alphonsus entered in a sensible manner into a participation of those sufferings with which his mind was occupied. These celestial favours prepared him for a great sacrifice. Alphonsus' only consolation after the grievous losses he had sustained was the young son who survived. This child, then three years of age, of a prepossessing exterior, and endowed with excellent qualities, promised very favourably.

One day his father, considering with the light of faith the beauty of this poor soul, began to think how dreadful a misfortune it would be should this dear child ever lose the grace of God by mortal sin. Deeply penetrated by the injury that would result to the Divine Majesty, and replenished with supernatural tenderness, which had for its object the eternal interests of his child, he conjured the Lord to take this little innocent one out of the world before he was capable of offending Him, if He foresaw that he would ever violate His law by mortal sin. The generous father was heard, and God accepted of the holocaust. The following night Alphonsus thought he saw his son going to be buried, and before the end of the month he assisted at his funeral, considering himself happy in having secured Heaven to him by an act of heroism little inferior to that of Abraham, since it was not only the result of obedience, but of charity.

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The last links which bound Alphonsus to the world were now severed; he had a little before closed the eyes of his mother, and his sisters only wished for a deeper retreat, in order to occupy themselves solely with their salvation.

He now began to be favoured with an extraordinary gift of divine prayer, accompanied with the strongest impulses of divine love in his heart. He determined to quit the world, and to give himself unreservedly to God by embracing a Religious life. The recollection of the following vision which he had, and of which Father Martinez, his confessor, a learned and enlightened spiritualist, had given him the solution, undoubtedly confirmed him in this design, and was the first sign or omen of his vocation to the Society of Jesus. He seemed to see during his sleep, hanging over a high tower, a cloud consisting of an immense flight of dark looking birds of ominous appearance, which obscured the heavens and filled the whole atmosphere with their wild and uncouth cries; suddenly a beautiful dove of dazzling whiteness appeared, bearing on its breast a silver plate on which was inscribed the adorable name of Jesus in bright characters; she engaged this concourse of enemies in combat, and soon dispersed them. The same cloud again appeared, and the vanquished army prepared to combat; the intrepid dove attacked them once more with the same success. Finally, after a third combat with these furious enemies, the gentle dove completely routed them. This extraordinary vision filled him with

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wonder; he conceived that God betokened to him something by it, but what it might be he could not tell. Father Martinez, after long consideration and prayer, assured him that this dream foretold the struggles, difficulties, and temptations which he would have to sustain against himself and the powers of hell, and the victory which he would gain over them in the Society of which the name of Jesus constituted the strength and confidence, and which he would one day enter. Alphonsus afterwards discovered the truth of this from his personal experience, and the three combats which he sustained against the infernal spirits in defence of his chastity. The dark birds represented in his eyes the devils; the dove himself, its snow-white breast his chastity, the name of Jesus the armour with which he fought, viz., the grace of God and his love for Jesus Christ. In the meanwhile, he continued to make daily advances in spiritual life, and having reached his thirty-eighth year, he applied for admission into the Society of Jesus. But the Fathers in Segovia did not judge him fit, on account of his advanced age and little learning. Having renounced all he possessed in favour of his sisters, he repaired to Valencia, attired in the garb of a poor person, in order to see Father Louis Santander, Rector of the Jesuit College there, and who had been his director in spiritual life in Segovia. By his advice he applied himself to the study of Latin, in order to qualify himself for the Priesthood, or rather, to give him time to reflect maturely on his vocation;

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he did not neglect on that account any of his private exercises. He was observed to frequent the Sacraments as at Segovia, and his conduct was altogether so edifying that he was regarded as a saint in the house in which he lodged, and where Father Santander had given him also the care of a little child, whom he attended to the College.

It was thus that he sought to gain the benediction of Heaven, and to know more clearly the divine will in his regard; but he made very little progress in his studies. Whereupon God soon dilated his heart, and moved him to abandon the world entirely, and to seek to devote himself to His love and service in the Society of Jesus in the humble degree of a Lay-brother, which he considered the most proper for his humility, mortification, and devotion.

But the devil, who foresaw the progress which the man of God would make in virtue if he once entered into Religion, spread a snare for him, so much the more dangerous as it would assuredly withdraw him from his vocation. Alphonsus had remarked in the class a poor student, who appeared to be about his own age; his manners and discourse only tended towards virtue, and conformity of inclinations facilitated to him the intimate acquaintance with Alphonsus, whose confidence he sought to gain. Our saint, who did not conceive the slightest distrust of his companion, formed a friendship with him without reflecting on a circumstance which ought to have enlightened him, and which afterwards did, when he considered

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that during the two years of his association with him, this man, who made a profession of piety, did not once approach the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist. Their friendship, being considerably cemented, the pretended saint, for he affected the exterior and language of one, retired suddenly to a hermit's cell, known by the name of St. Matthew's, two day's journey from Valencia, took there the habit of a solitary, and wrote to his friend to come and join him. Alphonsus, naturally inclined towards solitude, decided on paying him a visit, and, as it was then vacation, he set out without saying anything of his journey to his director. Scarcely had he arrived at St. Matthew's, when the new hermit made use of every effort to detain him, and to induce him to embrace the state of life which he himself had adopted. Our Saint had at first yielded, not because he felt himself called to that state of life, but in order to satisfy his companion. He soon felt a scruple for not having first consulted his confessor on the important step he was taking, and God did not permit that he should yield finally, and, having given his host some hopes of his final sojourn with him, he returned to Valencia to consult his director as to his future course. Father Santander, having heard from him all that had passed, replied, "I fear very much, Alphonsus, that you will be accessory to your own ruin." "And why?" asked the latter, with astonishment. "Because," replied the Father, "I see that you are inclined to follow your own ideas rather than

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the counsels of your director, and in acting thus you secure your own perdition." Alphonsus was so struck with these words, that rising from his seat and throwing himself at the feet of his confessor, "Ah, Father," said he, "I am resolved no longer to be guided by my own ideas; dispose of me as you think best." And he exclaimed, "I wish to do Thy will, O my God, all my life—this shall be my security, never will I again attempt to do my own!" Then, by the advice of his confessor, he begged of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, to obtain for him the grace and favour of admission into the Society of her Son. He felt in his heart a voice that seemed to say, "This is the will of God, that you enter into the Society of Jesus." Henceforward he adhered to no other counsels than that of the guide whom God had given him, and he did not hesitate, according to his instructions, to seek admission into the Society, to which he plainly perceived he was called. The most probable conjectures regarding the pretended hermit was, that the devil assumed the appearance of a student, in order to draw Alphonsus from the path traced out for him by Almighty God. Such was his own opinion, and what follows tended to confirm him in this idea. The night preceding that of his entrance into Religion, as he slept in an apartment on the ground floor, he heard suddenly, at break of day, a loud knocking against the casement of his chamber, and some one loudly calling him by name; having opened the window, he perceived, to his great astonishment, the

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hermit, who with a menacing air overwhelmed him with reproaches, accused him of breaking his word, and commanded him to return as soon as possible to St. Matthew's, to take possession of the hermitage; but to no purpose, for Alphonsus made no reply, but closed the window, and passed the rest of the night in continual prayer and renewal of his good resolutions.

As he had not communicated his design to any one, and the hermitage being at a considerable distance, too far for any report to have reached so soon, he no longer doubted that the enemy of his salvation was the sole author of the snare. Grateful for his escape, he determined anew to distrust his own judgment, and abandon himself wholly to the direction of his spiritual guide. After weighing maturely the reasons which induced him to embrace a Religious life according to the institute of St. Ignatius, our Saint, strengthened by the decision of his confessor, presented himself to Father Anthony Cordeses, Provincial of Arragon, who was then at Valencia. He was a man of God, in whom wisdom and experience were heightened by supernatural illuminations. He examined with the greatest attention Alphonsus' vocation, interrogated him on his dispositions, and was persuaded that he would follow the divine will in admitting him into the Society. Two obstacles still existed to the accomplishment of Alphonsus' desires; he appeared little qualified for the functions of the ministry, which required learning, and whereof he was not possessed,

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having made, up to that time, but little progress in the study of the Latin language, and his age being such as to give no prospect of success for the future; but the humility of Alphonsus soon neutralized this first difficulty, as he declared that his sole ambition was to be received amongst the Temporal Coadjutors, or Lay-brothers, who devoted themselves to domestic avocations. This post, though affording little to attract the eyes of men, was the more conformable to his inclination for a hidden life, and to the mean sentiments which he entertained of himself. The age of Alphonsus formed the most serious obstacle. He was then forty years old, and both body and health were much weakened and impaired by mortifications and austerities. The assembled Fathers of the College were divided in their sentiments; on the one hand, they recognized uncommon merit in the proposed subject; on the other, they feared that a man so old, who was not exempt from infirmities, would be a burthen to Religion, and could not render it any service. The Father Provincial finally decided the question, by saying that he would receive Alphonsus in order that the Society should not lose a Saint. "I think," added he, "that he will be useful to all by his example and prayers." These words, proceeding from a man so enlightened as Father Cordeses, decided all the votes, and they were considered as a certain presage of the eminent virtues which would distinguish the new Brother. Never was prophecy better justified by the event.

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Alphonsus having attained the summit of his wishes, rendered a thousand acts of thanksgiving to the Divine Goodness which had at last opened to him the port of Religion, and on the 31st day of January, 1571, he entered the Novitiate of the College of Valencia, amongst the Lay-brothers, where, according to the intentions of the Provincial, he was to make his noviceship. He soon became the model of his brethren, by the exact and fervent practice of all the virtues of his state. All admired his profound humility, his patience under every trial, his continual recollection and contempt of himself; and it was easy to perceive by his conduct, that in quitting the world he had quitted his own will, so remarkable was he for distrust of his own judgment, contempt for his body, and esteem for perfection. The most abject and laborious offices he coveted so much the more, as his Superiors would not allow him to use any corporal mortifications on account of his weakness; but the virtue in which he began to excel, and which was always his distinguishing characteristic, was obedience; it increased with his years, and made him grow in the eyes of Almighty God, even to the plenitude of that perfect age which is the consummation of sanctity. In fine, from the first day this holy Brother began to serve God in the Society of His Blessed Son, he made a firm resolution to serve Him with the greatest diligence, and to this end he besought His Divine Majesty that He would be pleased to exercise him in continual pains and travails.

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Alphonsus passed only six months at Valencia; after this short period so high was the idea conceived of his sanctity, that a longer probation was deemed unnecessary, and he was sent to the College which had just been founded for the Society in the Island of Majorca. This island is the most considerable of the Baleares, situate along the eastern coast of Spain; its extent is inconsiderable, but it is populous and fertile. It had then a Viceroy, a Bishop, and a Court of Justice. Such was the theatre which God had prepared for the eminent virtues of His servant. Alphonsus passed the rest of his days there, and to the age of eighty he shed around him the sweet odour of Jesus Christ, employing himself with indefatigable zeal, as far as his strength permitted, in the departments of Burser and Porter of the College. It was in these offices, where charity and humility are equally exercised, that he acquired those treasures of merit which have caused him to be ranked amongst the Blessed.

He pursued his noviceship with still greater ardour and joy as he saw himself farther removed from his country and relations. Totally occupied in labouring for God and His servants, he found everything so easy and sweet, that he often complained he felt no mortification, and found nothing to suffer for God. He would often exclaim, "Thou knowest, O my Lord Jesus, the purpose of my soul. Thou knowest how much I hate this wicked flesh; how I would by every means mortify and torment it; but I esteem

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more the will of those by whose judgment Thou hast wished me to be guided. He became so punctual and precise in the observance of every rule, even in the smallest things, that during the forty-six subsequent years of his life in the Society, he was never known wilfully to violate any one.

On account of his humble and contemptible opinion of himself he began to be attacked with melancholy and discouraging thoughts. He considered himself guilty of too many sins, too little capable of serving the Society or doing any good, to think of persevering amongst such fervent servants of God; but on redoubling his prayers and tears, he received from Heaven the assurance that he should persevere and die in it.

He made his first or simple vows on the 5th day of April, 1573, after which, as he was continuing with the same unrelenting fervour in his hatred of himself, horror of sloth, love and zeal in the service of his brethren, and in every duty of his state, he was afflicted with another disheartening temptation, arising from the dread of the terrible punishments which await unfaithful Religious. He seemed to behold before him the torments of hell; he even at times, by the permission of Almighty God, felt within himself some of the pains; in his dreams, as well as awake, he was cruelly tormented; in vain he called upon God with sighs and tears; he found no consolation. Thus becoming unusually alarmed for his salvation (not so much through dread of the torments

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to which he resigned himself for the will of God, but on account of offending His Divine Majesty, and being *for ever* banished from His love), having continued in this affliction of mind during several days, God at length came to his assistance. He saw an exceedingly bright splendour beaming upon him from Heaven, which instantly dissipated his gloomy thoughts, fears and anxiety, and filled his breast with such confidence in the divine assistance, that not only then, but ever after, the sole remembrance of this light was sufficient to restore comfort and joy to his troubled mind. But God, Who had bestowed upon His servant such singular graces, also reserved for him, as will be presently seen, more extraordinary trials.

On the 5th of April, 1585, our Saint pronounced his last or solemn vows, which attached him irrevocably to Religion, and advanced him to the degree of formed Temporal Coadjutor. Divine Providence destined him to become the model and protector of those who were afterwards to sanctify themselves in the same path.

If the life of Blessed Alphonsus were intended to present the multiplicity of objects and diversity of events, which invest with so much interest those men whom the world calls great, merely because they make a great noise, it would be only necessary for us to follow the course of his actions, to signalize what was remarkable in them, and to present them by turns, like so many pictures, to the curiosity of the age; but

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the life of an obscure Religious, the regularity of which constitutes its principal merits, presents more virtues than incidents, and ought to be proposed rather as a subject of imitation than of admiration to the pious reader. In order to attain this end, and to depict the holy Brother perfectly, it will suffice to sketch the obligations of the state which he embraced, and to show with what perfection he fulfilled them. The heroic virtues of Alphonsus will prepare the mind of the reader for the supernatural graces with which he was favoured, and after having considered him in the light of a perfect Religious, there will be nothing astonishing in finding him a worker of miracles.

After taking his last vows, he considered himself bound by a fresh motive to make still greater efforts to attain to the perfection of his state. He left in writing a resolution to this effect, "You must strive with all possible care to please God in such a manner as neither to do nor behold anything, without first consulting Him, and in everything to seek Him alone and His glory." So composed was he in his exterior, that the very sight of him was enough to move the beholders to piety and imitation. Everybody considered and extolled him as a Saint; they regarded him as so great a favourite of Heaven, that his prayers were constantly requested for spiritual and corporal cures and benefits.

It may here be mentioned as a fact worthy of notice what our Saint himself used to relate to scrupulous

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persons, viz., that when he entered the Society he wrote and prepared the general confession of all his past life—required by the rules to be made by all—with the greatest care and attention, in order to free himself by this means of all scrupulosity with which he was then troubled. Being asked by his confessor whether, in the former general confessions which he had made, he had committed any error, or was aware that he had forgotten anything, he said that he had not, whereupon his confessor bade him tear up his paper and content himself with a common confession. "By this means," said he, "I was ever after freed from all scruples, God compensating my obedience with perfect peace of mind."

Before proceeding, I consider it expedient to mention a rule which he had prescribed for himself, and which regulated the order of his actions for the entire day. The following is an abridgement of it—

He was accustomed to divide the day into various duties of piety, so that no hour was without some of them—none that had not a particular Patron Saint to be addressed. Called up in the morning by the sound of the bell, he instantly arose as at the summons of God. Then he commenced his acts of thanksgiving and love to God, renewed his resolutions of suffering for His sake and of serving Him more fervently in future. Then, signing himself with the Sign of the Cross, he profoundly adored each Person of the Ever Blessed Trinity, thanking Them for having preserved

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him during the night, reciting the hymn of the Church —*Jam lucis orto sidere*, &c., and the *Te Deum*, until he came to the words, *Dignare Domine die isto sine peccato* —"Vouchsafe, O Lord, this day to preserve us from all sin," then, thinking solely on death, he would utter these last words as if that was to be his last day. After this he recited the Litanies of the Blessed Virgin and other devout prayers, as preludes to his meditation, in which, after having first humbly begged leave of God to approach His Divine Majesty in prayer, he always petitioned for the grace to love Almighty God, our Lord Jesus Christ, His Blessed Virgin Mother, and his neighbour. Then he unreservedly gave up his mind and heart to the contemplation of heavenly things. During the day he said the Rosary and many other prayers, with which in his office of Porter he kept himself well occupied. As it was perfectly indifferent to such an obedient man as was the Blessed Brother what was ordered or enjoined by obedience, provided it was so enjoined, the office of Porter he performed as long as he could stand upon his legs, but with such an example of high and solid virtue as to produce great fruit and edification both at home and abroad.

After having assisted at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which he generally served, he returned to his post to fulfil the functions of Porter. The sound of the bell he regarded as the voice of God, and answered within himself—"I am ready, O Lord! Thou hast called me. What is Thy will?" And hastening, he

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imagined to himself that he was opening the door for God. Hence he left in his notes this—"You shall receive, hear, and address the person at the gate as Christ, not as man, which also you shall observe with those of the house when you open the door to let them out." Consequently he behaved himself to all with the greatest respect and affability.

From this his constant practice of the presence of God arose that uniform and perpetual evenness of temper, calmness of mind, affability, and assiduity with which he was distinguished. Hence also his conversation, ever free from idle words and tales, and seasoned with the salt of piety, led several to a contempt of the world and change of life, and even reformed Religious Communities. Hence also the frequent visions of Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin, His most holy Mother, with numbers of the Blessed Saints, with which he was favoured.

Whether he was intrusted with a message or was the bearer of the answer, he was always the same, always untiring. He profited of the necessary intercourse which he had with his neighbour to mingle with his discourse some words of piety, which he seasoned with a wise discretion. The leisure time which his employment admitted of he consecrated to mental prayer or the recital of the Rosary, and there was pointed out with veneration after his death an obscure recess, where he usually retired to pursue his prayer in secret. At the close of each hour this vigilant and faithful servant of God demanded of

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himself an exact account of his actions, and examined his conscience on the failures of which he might have been guilty, or the occasions of merit which he might have permitted to escape him. Then, recurring to the Blessed Virgin and to the Saint whom he had chosen for the past hour—for, as before observed, he did not allow a single hour to escape him without invoking a new intercessor in Heaven—he formed new resolutions and resolved to employ his future moments better. His ingenious devotion found also a method of consecrating each hour of the day by a particular practice in honour of the most holy Mother of God. If it were necessary that he should leave the house to execute an order of his Superior, he first presented himself before the Blessed Sacrament, and addressed to Jesus Christ, Whose presence in the tabernacle he sensibly felt, this prayer, which he pronounced with fervour—"Lord, if thou knowest that I shall find, on leaving the house, even through obedience, an occasion of offending Thee, I conjure Thee to take away my life here, where Thou art really present, for Thou solely art my life, and I prefer a thousand deaths to causing Thee the slightest displeasure." Then turning in spirit towards the Queen of Heaven, who was his ordinary refuge, and recommending himself to her love and protection, he said to her, with the Church, "Show that thou art our Mother."

It is not surprising that after such precautions Alphonsus preserved in the streets and places of public resort a modesty more angelic than human;

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it sufficed to look at him to be penetrated by the air of sanctity which was diffused over his person, and it was generally said that to see him was equal to an eloquent sermon. In the two daily examens of conscience prescribed by the rule, he proposed to himself Jesus Christ as the model and mirror of his actions; he examined and compared his conduct with our Divine Redeemer's example; and in examining, he would ask himself, "Do you represent in yourself His look, gait, and modesty? Do you take your food, sleep, receive mortifications and injuries as He would? Do you in the same manner seek the honour and glory of His Eternal Father?" His slight imperfections he visited with the severest censures, reproaching himself in confusion and regret for having spent so many years of such precious and favourable time in the Society with so little fruit. With what zeal he studied perfection in everything appears from certain notes of his which he thus resolved: "You shall do nothing merely for the sake of doing it, but shall perform everything in the most perfect manner, imitating Christ as much as is in your power, and as if the affair of your salvation and the divine glory depended upon the perfection of each individual action."

The action requiring most vigilance in the ordinary course of a Religious life, and in which the soul is in the greatest danger of being weakened, whilst the body recruits its strength, was that in which the virtue of Alphonsus principally shone; thus, in taking his

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repasts he neglected nothing which could fortify him against the undue satisfaction of his senses. Let him speak for himself.

"The first thing you are to observe at table," wrote he in his resolutions, "is not to make known what you would like, accepting for the love of God the meats which you do not relish, and depriving yourself of those which would be agreeable to your palate; you will observe besides a great modesty, recalling to your mind incessantly the presence of God, Whose service ought alone to occupy you. If you want anything, you will try to do without it, rejoicing interiorly at this privation; you will never be the first to commence eating; you will add nothing to season the meats which will be presented to you, and eating without eagerness, you will occupy yourself with God." The worldling may consider these details to be frivolous, but the enlightened Christian will admire the perfection exacted by the rules which our Saint laid down for himself, and in the observance of which he never failed; we only assert what is credible, therefore, when we say that he appeared in the refectory as a man dead to his senses, and entirely absorbed in contemplation. When he entered the refectory, he first piously offered himself and everything there to God; then, recommending the suffering souls in Purgatory to the Blessed Virgin, he took his meals with tears, and sometimes paused so long in eating, that the Rector was obliged to admonish him to continue his meal. We must also understand as referring to himself,

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what he left in writing as if said of another, "That he was accustomed during meals to be replenished by God and His holy Mother with such heavenly delights as to surpass all description; that his food seemed to be that of one living out of the flesh, led by no relish to satisfy necessity, and that while he eats, he is absorbed in the most sublime contemplation."

Such was the rule of conduct which Alphonsus traced out for himself on his entrance into Religion, and to which he was uniformly faithful to the end. If we reflect on the subjection of his own will, and the dependence on the spirit of God, which the constant observance of such practices exacted, if we observe particularly that the works of supererogation never trenched upon his essential duties, and that he never violated one of the rules of his holy Founder during the forty-six years that he spent in Religion, we may perhaps form a just and complete idea of his sanctity.

Father Michael Julian, of the Society of Jesus, in a very early account, written by him soon after the Saint's death, thus sums up: "To be brief, by his practice of all sorts of virtue, he seemed rather to be an Angel than a man, for not only in these later years, but for forty years together, he hath not been noted to have done anything imperfectly, or according to his own humour, but all his actions seemed to be done most perfectly. Insomuch that although the whole world, and the forces of hell itself should have

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opposed him, he would not have ceased to do that which was the most perfect and for the greater glory of God, which he had continually in his mouth, and still more in his heart. He was so punctual in the observance of his rules, that he would rather have been cut in pieces than break the least of them. He did so hate singularity, that even in these later years, wherein he was so subject to infirmity, he could not endure to sit at the table of the convalescents, or such as were weak and recovering their health, much less to have any particular thing brought him. Many have conceived so great an opinion of him, that they would willingly have passed the seas only to have seen him, and many great men, both secular and ecclesiastical, were wont to come to the College and stay there some time, only to converse with him, who went away astonished at his readiness in answering at the gate, and satisfying all who came, by his gracious carriage, sweet answers, and diligence in his office."

Enlightened by the Spirit of God, the Blessed Alphonsus was early impressed with the truth that there could be no solid virtue unless based on the foundation of humility; thus he neglected nothing which could inculcate a true contempt of himself, grounded on the knowledge of his misery and nothingness; he had rendered familiar to himself those words of St. Austin, repeated by St. Francis of Assisi—"Lord, grant that I may know Thee, and that I may know myself."

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God heard the ardent prayer of His servant, and accorded him an interior light which caused him to feel sensibly the infinite greatness of the Sovereign Master and the baseness of the creature. He never lost sight of the majesty, the power, the infinite purity, and all the perfections of God, and these considerations made him entertain sentiments of humility so profound, that he could think nothing in the universe so vile and contemptible as himself; not only did he judge himself unworthy to inhabit the house of the Lord, but he was astonished that the earth could bear him, and he acknowledged in confidence to one of his confessors, that he felt imbued with so profound a horror of himself, that he never appeared before others without the confusion of a man whose presence filled all around him with unsurmountable disgust and aversion.

Providence permitted, in order to encourage this feeling, that towards the end of his life his chest exhaled, in consequence of his infirmities, an odour which was insupportable to himself, and though he alone perceived it, and no person suffered from approaching him, he was not the less astonished that his presence was endured, and that he was not interdicted from all intercourse with the rest of the community. But he did not need any other motive than the remembrance of his sins to look on himself with the last degree of contempt and horror, since he sincerely believed himself to be the greatest of

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all sinners, and considered himself and his sins as a mass of infection that even tainted the air. Impressed with this conviction, he entertained the most profound respect for each of his brethren, looking on them all as his superiors, and being on all occasions willing to serve each of them, as if he had been their slave. He was surprised that they could endure or approach him. Whenever he opened the door for them, he sunk in confusion and shame at his own nothingness and their virtues and merits; he deemed himself worthy only of contempt and punishment, often exclaiming—"I have sinned against Heaven and against Thee, and am not worthy to be called Thy son; Lord have mercy on me." Hence also arose his constant care to choose always the last place, and the affection with which he occupied himself in the most humiliating offices, as also the contemptible appellations which he on all occasions bestowed on himself. If the Superiors, in order to try his virtue, told him that he was a useless man, a burthen to the College, and that he occupied uselessly the place of another, who would render at least some service, then joy shone in his countenance, a smile of satisfaction played around his lips, and these reproaches made the same impression on him as praise and applause make on minds full of vanity and self-esteem. On one occasion our Divine Redeemer, seeing him in great affliction, came to console him, embraced him like a tender Father, and assured him that He had pardoned his sins, of

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which pardon also the Blessed Virgin afterwards repeated to him the assurance.

Father Laurentius of St. John arrived in quality of Visitor at the College of Majorca, and as he knew that Alphonsus had received from God a particular talent for speaking on spiritual matters, he commanded him to ascend the pulpit of the refectory, before the entire community, and to discourse on a Religious virtue. Our Saint was much mortified by this distinction; at the same time he obeyed instantly, and spoke during half an hour with more strength, justice, and depth than could have been displayed by a theologian. Father Laurentius, not content with having elicited the supernatural illuminations of this holy Brother, wished to give him an occasion of showing his profound humility. He asked him drily what he thought of his own exhortation, and without giving him time to reply, added, "As for me, I think it is one of those chimerical discourses which you repeat to everybody." At the same time, he ordered him to go and prostrate himself before his brethren, and humbly to kiss their feet. At this new order, which seemed to Alphonsus a recompense for the confusion which the first had caused him, he hastened to obey, showing by the joy depicted on his countenance how agreeable such mortifications were to him. If, on the contrary, esteem were manifested towards him, if he were spoken to in a eulogizing strain, then the pain which this humble Religious experienced pourtrayed itself in his countenance; he changed colour, and

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appeared to experience the same pain as a very vain man would do who had been the subject of the most bitter derision. He said, in allusion to this subject, "that a negro would consider himself insulted if the fairness of his complexion were made a subject of conversation before him, because he could not be deluded on this point. It is the same," added he, "with regard to him who knows himself well; he cannot be deceived as to the degree of esteem which he merits." He avoided with so scrupulous an attention all that could attract consideration towards himself, that he never failed when he received the letters of persons of distinction who consulted him on their interior, and sometimes even on their worldly affairs, to destroy immediately the signature, fearing that if the letter went astray, he might be looked upon as a man whose advice was valuable and worthy the confidence of the most estimable persons. The humility of the man of God was so much the more astonishing, as he received from Heaven the most extraordinary graces. In the midst of ecstasies, revelations, and supernatural apparitions, very far from finding in these signal favours an occasion of looking on himself with less contempt, he made use of them to confirm himself in the sentiment of his own baseness; in fact, his continual distrust of himself made him entertain the greatest apprehensions regarding these heavenly visitations; he feared to fall into an illusion, and to be the sport of the angel of darkness. Even in these moments, when God communicated

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Himself with the greatest familiarity, he wished to withdraw himself by an humble refusal, conjuring the Lord not to conduct him by this path; on which our Divine Redeemer redoubled His favours and caresses.

Admirable combat! in which the Master evinced the more generosity as the servant testified the greater fear and humility. Nevertheless, our Saint had not, it appears, any reason thus to distrust the extraordinary graces of which he was the subject, since he was reassured by his spiritual guides; and in a revelation, the truth of which he could not reasonably doubt, God had given him the assurance of his salvation, promising that he should not pass through the flames of Purgatory. Notwithstanding these assurances, always fearing to fall into error, he desired ardently that some annoying persecution should be raised against him, and it was not his fault that he was not publicly reprehended and chastised as a man who had fallen into illusion. If God did not grant to His servant the full extent of his desires in this respect, He at least permitted that his humility should be put to a trial which would have been very severe to a Religious less grounded in solid virtue than the holy Brother. A Provincial of the Order, being of opinion that there was too much importance attached to all that concerned Alphonsus, made his sentiments on this subject known to the community during his absence, and having caused him to be called, he ordered that his gown should be shortened, demanded all his papers, and enjoined him never to write a

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word for the future without showing it to the Superior of the College. The joy of our Saint was never greater than on this occasion, and whilst the pieces cut from his habit were collected, unknown to him, to be treated as precious relics, he congratulated himself that he was at last done justice to, in being treated with the contempt he merited. It was a trial of quite another nature, and which cost infinitely to the humility of Alphonsus, when an order was signified to him by his Superiors to note down in writing his lights from God, together with his sentiments, and to expose in detail all the celestial graces he had received during his entire life. In order to conceal their real intention, and to prevent him from suspecting the real motive of this demand, his Superiors gave him as a reason, that they wished to know the state of his conscience, that they might judge of the progress he had made in virtue, and to discover whether he had fallen into any illusion. The obedience of the blessed Brother was very perfect; but though he did not conjecture that his work would ever be made any other use of than to direct him the more securely in the road to salvation, he feared that if by chance this account should fall into other hands, some esteem might be conceived for one who had received such extraordinary favour from Heaven, and to whom God had made such admirable communications as those he was about to reveal. It is impossible to form an idea of the confusion into which he was thrown by

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this thought; in his anxiety he went to prostrate himself at the foot of the crucifix, and conjured the Lord to change the dispositions of his Superiors, but a voice which seemed to issue from the image of Jesus crucified, intimated to him an order to obey, declaring that such was the will of God, and that His glory required it. Alphonsus respectfully bent his head, and considered it a duty to accomplish what was demanded of him with all the exactitude of which he was capable; but his ingenious humility suggested to him never to name himself, but to speak always as of a third person, so that in all cases none but his Superiors could recognize the individual. In this recital God, Who was willing that His servant should be glorified, had other views, and permitted that he should raise, without intending it, a monument to his eminent virtues, thereby to render testimony to the great things grace had done for him. Unless this innocent artifice had been made use of, there would have been but a very imperfect idea conceived of the supernatural gifts which were the recompense of his sanctity, since he had passed more than thirty years in Religion without making any person except his director aware that there passed anything extraordinary within him. It is in this faithful account which the blessed Brother gave to his Superiors of the most intimate sentiments of his soul, that his ideas with regard to humility will be made manifest. "Oh! how dear and precious," said he, "is humility in the sight of God! When

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a truly humble soul does any good, she recalls quickly the source whence it proceeds, acknowledging that she can do nothing without the assistance of God, and only attributes to herself what is evil in all her works. I tremble," adds he, "when I think how artfully pride penetrates into the heart of man. They may truly be called unfortunate who are honoured, and with whom everything succeeds; even the most holy are in danger of being lost by it; happy, on the contrary, are they who combat against temptation, who struggle against sadness, and who walk in the midst of afflictions; for when God is willing to give His servants a sure means of acquiring humility, He conducts them by the path of suffering, and especially of temptation. After which He communicates to them great lights, with a practical knowledge of their nothingness, whereby they acquire a great experience, and a special aid to divest themselves of all self-esteem, and truly to despise themselves. It is not only humility of the understanding, it is still more that of the heart which Jesus Christ counsels us to acquire, so that it should be imprinted in the depths of the soul. He who is truly humble experiences joy in the midst of affronts, because he clearly sees that contempt is his due." Alphonsus evidently depicts the state of his own soul when he speaks of humility in the following terms: "Perfect love establishes the soul in the depths of self-knowledge; she lives there as if dead to all the things of this world, and to herself. This

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divine love with which the soul is inflamed enlightens her as to her defects, in the same manner as the sun renders perceptible the particles scattered in the air, so that she sees God and herself in the same light. She regards all created objects with contempt, she no longer enjoys the company of creatures; all her delight, all her conversations are with Jesus and Mary; and excepting this, there is nothing for her but grief and bitterness in all things here below. How true it is that the beauty of the just soul is from within." As the sentiments of the Saints cannot be better expressed than by simply stating their own words, we have not hesitated to give literally the foregoing lengthened quotations from the holy Brother's writings.

In order to increase and purify more and more the sanctity of our dear Brother, Almighty God made him pass through the trial of the worst and fiercest temptations that a soul filled with His divine love could possibly endure. A soul so humble could not but be perfectly chaste, since the grace of holy virginity is the glorious reward of humility; but we cannot read without astonishment, the recital of the rude assaults with which this precious treasure was purchased by our Saint, and it will not be a small consolation to those fervent Christians, who have to struggle like the Apostle against rebellious flesh, to know that these humiliating trials can be combined with the most pure and sublime sanctity.

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During the space of seven years God permitted the devils to pursue a most unrelenting and cruel war against his body to overcome his chastity. Finding their invisible efforts, by foul thoughts and impure suggestions, always defeated by his unshaken constancy, they came openly and publicly to attack him in great numbers, and with the most horrid and impure forms, gestures, and actions. The chaste servant of God kept his eyes firmly closed; although he could not banish from his imagination the indecent images with which the fiends haunted him, so forcibly impressed were they upon his mind, that, in the greatest affliction he invoked our Divine Redeemer and His Blessed Virgin Mother, and all the Saints. All seemed deaf to his prayers. But no: God was not heedless of his calls, since He gave him the interior grace and strength, through love of Him, not to yield in so dreadful an encounter. Confiding in His assistance, by Whose adorable will he thus combatted, Alphonsus, like another Anthony, boldly challenged the infernal furies, defied all their might, upbraided them with their want of strength and power, thus to come in such numbers against one poor miserable man, who, with the adorable Name of Jesus, would put them all to flight. Confounded at these words, they fled.

Then, returning thanks to God, he exclaimed, "Thine is the victory, O Jesus! In Thee solely has my weakness triumphed. The Lord is my protector, at whom shall I tremble? If armies stand

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against me, my heart shall not fear." So great were the spiritual consolations with which his soul was replenished after this conflict, that he was forced to cry out, "Enough, O Lord! enough!" He left afterwards an account in writing, in which he declared that the temptations which he suffered in this combat were so great, so abominable, so powerful, as to surpass all expression; and that he was reduced to such terrible straits, pain, and weakness from the violence of his efforts to resist them, that he must have died, if God had not put his enemies to flight, and thus enabled him to breathe and recover.

The devils, irritated by this repulse, meditated another attack upon him about midnight. Alphonsus being forewarned of their design, immediately had recourse to the Blessed Virgin, to his holy Patrons, and to all the Saints, beseeching them to let him suffer all the torments of hell, and preserve his innocence, rather than permit him to offend his most loving God, even by the smallest sin. After this he calmly awaited the arrival of his foes, who at their hour came with greater numbers and fury than before, and filled the place with such cries, yells, and hellish uproar, as though they intended to tear the house down. Some seized him, dragged him about the room, beat and tore him; others, in the form of indecent females, clasped and enticed him by every impure act; in vain did the holy man shut his eyes, struggle, call to Heaven for help: his imagination as well as his body was completely in the power

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of the foul fiend. But God abandoned not His faithful suffering servant, He preserved his mind and heart pure and unsullied, banished the fiends, and restored to him his peace and comfort of mind. But so exhausted, broken, and disfigured was he for several days after this conflict, that he was thought to be on the point of dying; whilst, on the other hand, the interior vigour and courage of his soul were so strengthened that ever after he cared no more for the infernal spirits than for a swarm of feeble insects incapable of doing him the slightest injury. This he often declared, but added that he would rather suffer the most cruel martyrdom, or be burnt alive, than again endure such a dreadful and dangerous encounter. To make this holy and blessed Brother consent to some sin was the principal object of the devils. Perceiving that all their efforts hitherto tended only to obtain for him an increase of grace and merit, instead of conquering him, confused and mortified, they resolved to attempt a third means. They came to him one night and, seizing him by the throat, declared to him that they would kill him if he did not consent to their will. "You shall not escape us," they said, "we will harass you night and day; you shall have no sleep, no repose." Alphonsus addressed himself to God, saying, "I am ready, O Lord, to suffer the death which they threaten, and all the tortures which they can inflict, to endure even the fires of hell, rather than swerve in the least degree from Thy love." Then turning

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to the fiends, "And ye, foul demons, go on, employ all your might and rage; behold me ready to satisfy your hatred, to endure all you threaten me with, to the Day of Judgment, for the love of my Lord Jesus Christ." The generous devotion of himself was sufficient to disperse his infernal foes. Our Blessed Lord soon indemnified His dear servant for his constancy, and poured into his soul the sweetest consolations. "Where wert Thou, my Jesus, during the frightful tempest?" exclaimed Alphonsus; "why didst Thou abandon me to my enemies?" "Fear not," replied the Lord, "I will never abandon thee;" and He then permitted him to comtemplate His adorable Wounds. The Blessed Virgin likewise favoured her faithful servant with a visit, and assured him that she would always be near him. This twofold visit replenished his soul with inexpressible joy, and inspired him with the greatest resolution for all future combats.

God sometimes permits the enemies of our salvation to try His servants by the rudest assaults, and it was by long and severe combats with the spirit of darkness that the Almighty was pleased to conduct Alphonsus to the perfection of the angelic virtue of chastity. The humble Religious, however, neglected nothing on his side to preserve the purity of his soul in all its lustre, and the most successful means which he employed were: (1) *a strict guard over his senses;* (2) *mortification;* (3) *prayer;* (4) *a tender devotion to the ever Blessed Mother of God, Queen of Virgins.* After the example of the holy Job, he made a

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compact with his eyes to withdraw them from every dangerous object; he never fixed them on the strangers who came continually to the College. Once since his entrance into Religion he happened to look through a window that he passed every day, but instantly recollecting himself, he cast down his eyes, and ever after severely reproached himself with this inadvertence as a great fault, and every time he passed the same window he inflicted some penance on himself as an atonement. We may form an idea of the care with which he avoided all communication with seculars by the following incident. One day he was sent to open the church for a lady who had asked for a confessor; scarcely had he admitted her, when she began to speak to him; but our Saint, who had received no orders to listen to her, turned abruptly away, and walked towards the sacristy. The lady, believing that she had not made herself understood, followed him through the church; the holy porter accelerated his pace, and soon made his escape without her having been able to extract a single word from him. His reserve on this head was so well known throughout the entire city of Majorca, that he was generally designated by the title of the *dead Brother*, and he was, in fact, so perfectly dead to his senses, that one would have often thought he had lost the use of them. Abroad he showed the same Religious gait, modesty, and recollection as at home; the same pious conversation on God and spiritual things; the same custody of

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senses, particularly his eyes, so as never, during the space of forty years, to look a woman in the face, although he was obliged to speak with so many, whom he in general quickly despatched by talking on the vanity, uncertainty, shortness, and dangers of this life, and the judgments, punishments, &c., of the next. He never even looked any man in the face but he wept most bitterly for a good while after. He often spoke of the necessity of guarding and bridling our senses abroad, if we wish to be free from interior attacks at home; saying that a look was sufficient for the devil to molest a Religious man in his cell; that nothing was more rare and more prudent, than to avoid his contagious strokes by a Religious blindness. He, in fact, by this careful custody of his senses, attained that blessed state of angelical purity both of body and soul required by his holy Father St. Ignatius in those of the Society. Not content with watching assiduously over his eyes when he had any danger to fear, he even forbade himself a simple glance of the most innocent curiosity, so that it would have been impossible for him to describe the edifices which he had a thousand times occasion to remark. He could never be persuaded to be present at the grand exhibitions which took place every year in the house, or the fireworks and other public rejoicings, although all this passed within the inclosure of the College; he never allowed himself the pleasure of examining the decorations of the church, nor the ornaments of the altars on

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solemn festivals, and although he accompanied his brethren to the country villa on recreation days, he refused himself the allowable relaxation of contemplating the beauty of the country or the verdure of the fields, and for once having by chance cast his eyes upon a coach passing by, he wept bitterly for his life after. His ears were not the less closed against all that could have been agreeable to them. When there occurred during the Office a religious symphony, though the singing and music were conformable to the gravity of the place, he buried himself in a contemplation so profound, that the sound of the instruments and voices could no longer reach him. His chastity, though so fiercely assaulted for seven years, as we have seen, by his infernal tempters, was so pure and refined that it seemed angelical rather than human; and notwithstanding that he was ever after free from all impure thoughts, he guarded it with the most jealous care and diffidence, since he never would indulge his senses with the least satisfaction, as, for example, the smell of a flower, the beauty of a garden, the harmony of music, or the like. During the forty-seven years that he lived in the Society, he never during all that time asked leave to go out of the house, except on one occasion only, and that for the spiritual good of his neighbour, who wished to consult him on some matter of conscience. Hospitals and prisons he joyfully visited, and performed the meanest offices towards the sick. At all other times he considered

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his cell as his grave, his life as an exile, his Religious profession as his vocation for Heaven. He deemed it absurd for one living, as he used to say, among the dead, in exile and amidst thorns, to seek for odours, delights, and flowers. His habit of mortifying his taste had rendered him almost insensible to the flavour of what was given him, or at least he knew so well how to conquer himself, that he partook with indifference of food which other persons could not touch. One day some intolerably bitter and sickening soup was served in the refectory; the Rector, finding that it was not drinkable, and fearing also that it might injure those who had the courage to surmount their repugnance, at once ordered it to be removed from the table; but Alphonsus had already received and finished his portion, although he abhorred its smell and taste, and was in consequence for several days afflicted with spasms in the stomach, accompanied with fever. Another time, in his old age, the cook intending to give him fresh eggs in the evening, presented him with some which were quite stale, so that he had scarcely opened the first when some of the Brothers, who noticed the bad smell, hastened to take away his plate, but it was too late, and the Saint, who never allowed an occasion of doing violence to himself to escape, had already finished one of them. In the last years of his life his teeth could not break the crust of the bread, and those who were near him took care to furnish him with the softest bits. He at first received this

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little service with gratitude; but soon reproaching himself with his delicacy, he would not permit that they should pay him this little attention. Before his old age (when, as before observed, he had lost all sense of taste and relish in his food from his long fasting and abstinence), if anything was served up agreeable to his palate, he would never touch it, contenting himself with what was most ordinary and disagreeable to him, never using any sauce, salt, or other seasoning; at the same time eating so little, and with such modesty, that he seemed rather to be feasting on spiritual delights. The fruits which he most liked he never would eat, unless by obedience. Sometimes, when any were served up at table, he would just taste them, in order not to be singular. While eating, his mind was always occupied with some pious thought, as of death, and then he would often so strongly picture to his imagination the horror and putrefaction of a dead body, as to excite nausea and disgust in his stomach, and interrupt his eating; so eagerly did he seek his greater mortification. His Divine Master knew well how to recompense the fervent Religious for the sacrifices which the spirit of mortification inspired him to make; during his meals He frequently imparted to him the most signal favours. Often he was observed to be transported, as it were, out of himself, and ravished in an ecstasy, and frequently conversing interiorly with His Blessed Mother; carried away by the vivacity of his affection, he was sometimes heard to exclaim (and especially on

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one occasion at table, when he was absorbed in meditating on his heavenly Mother), "Ah! O glorious Queen of Heaven, if I should one day behold thee in Heaven!" on which he received this sweet assurance from the lips of the ever Blessed Virgin herself, "My son, thou wilt one day enjoy this happiness," which replenished him with the sweetest consolation. O promise of ineffable joy! Consoling and worthy of the Blessed Mother of God! So tender and so powerful was his love towards her, that he felt confident of obtaining anything from God through her intercession. One day, during grace after dinner, viewing with a look of love and charity his brethren standing around, his heart burned with a wish to behold them all one day in the company of the Blessed in Heaven. It was told him that his wish should be accomplished, for in the evening, as he came to supper, he received a divine revelation that all were destined for Heaven; that he would have the happiness there to behold them all. Although he was in consequence fully persuaded of this, it was, however, afterwards confirmed by God; for on a subsequent day during grace, it was revealed to him that not only those present, but also all who were then in the Society should be saved, if they continued in it. Wonderful as this may appear, it is not, however, without example, since the same promise was formerly imparted by the same divine power and goodness to the holy Patriarch St. Benedict respecting the three first ages of his Order.

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It will be easily conceived that one so occupied with God was very reserved in his intercourse with creatures; he was an exact observer of silence, and never broke it except through necessity, and there never escaped from his lips during recreation hour any frivolous or useless words; and although he conversed all his lifetime with domestics and strangers, yet he is not known to have spoken the least idle word. His delight was to hear God spoken of; then he joined in the conversation, at least by his attention, and the air of contentment which his contenance exhibited, though he was ever more ready to question and listen than to speak himself and inform others, but if the conversation turned on matters unconnected with piety, he tried insensibly to bring it back to a subject more conformable to his taste as far as the character of the persons concerned permitted him; and when he could not succeed he soon fell asleep, whether it was that weary nature did not find at night in a slumber often interrupted by prayers, the repose of which he stood in need, or rather that his mind, continually occupied with God, could not diverge towards other subjects; and what makes it most remarkable is, that he awoke immediately the conversation on religious subjects was resumed.

Not content with practising continual mortification by the assiduous guard which he kept over his senses, the Blessed Alphonsus sought every method of exercising holy severities on himself; he had declared an implacable war against his body, treating it as an

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insolent slave, which could be subdued only by the harshest measures. In fine, the praise of our Saint's love and care of his chastity is completed by saying that he was an invincible, inexorable, and cruel enemy to his body; for that chastity is perfect which not only abstains from and hates all pleasures, but chastises and crucifies the flesh with the great Apostle, and brings it into subjection, by constant and perpetual mortification. Admirable was the purpose of his soul, which he often renewed during the day, of choosing sooner the torments of hell than to be so unhappy as to sully the lustre of this virtue. To his continual sorrow for his sins he added also constant penance and mortification, afflicting his flesh with all that it abhorred, and refusing it all that it coveted. He would quietly suffer himself to be bitten with flies and gnats and other vexatious insects, common in warm climates. He never made use of any protection against the rudeness of the weather or seasons. The thought of hell-fire tempered the heat of summer for him, and the heat of divine love softened the asperities of winter. Of two walks or paths he always chose the worst, of various weathers he preferred the rainy, cold or sultry; of different situations for his body he always took the most uncomfortable, so that when he sat he seemed to be harrassing himself rather than reposing; when he stood he rested chiefly on one leg, and that the weaker of the two. Even in washing his hands after meals, he consulted his love of poverty and

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mortification, for of two fountains at the entrance of the refectory, one of which flowed copiously and the other dribbled only in drops, he was never seen during thirty years and upwards to go to any other than the latter, which no one else frequented. When he was his own master, his voluntary penances were exceedingly severe, but in Religion his ardour was bridled, particularly on account of his frequent sickness.

In order to give a just idea of the manner in which he persecuted himself, we must follow the course of his actions, and consider him during each moment of the day, since he had discovered the secret of mortifying himself in a thousand ways even during the time consecrated to repose. Up to his sixtieth year he only slept on a stool, or in a chair, or lying on bare boards, and that only for a short time, on account of his continual colloquies with his Divine Master; even this he considered too comfortable a bed, and therefore rested in so uneasy a posture that one of his brethren, who had perceived this pious stratagem, and who wished to make a trial of it, could not stay in the same position for a quarter of an hour. At the age of sixty, his infirmities had reduced him to such a state of weakness, that his Superiors ordered him to sleep in a bed like others, and no longer to convert his repose into a punishment by his penitential inventions; he complied faithfully with the orders he had received, but when an occasion of satisfying his love for sufferings presented itself, he seized it with eager-

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ness. One day the mattress of his bed was taken away because on an occasion of pressing necessity there was no other to be found, and in the evening it was forgotten to be replaced. Alphonsus determined to say nothing about it, and was rejoiced at being obliged for one night at least to sleep on the ground; but one of the domestics perceived in time this forgetfulness, and informed the Superior, who ordered the mattress to be returned, with a strict order that he should make use of it. The same thing happened to him in his extreme old age; he was incapable of serving himself, and one of his Brothers had the care of making his bed. The latter, who had removed the mattress with the intention of replacing it soon, was called elsewhere and forgot to return it, so that our Saint would again have found in this inadvertence a precious opportunity of exercising his fervour, if the vigilance of the Superior had not once more defeated his hopes. At this period of his life, when his strength completely failed him, he was observed one day to be sorrowful and in tears, and on being asked the cause of it, he owned the subject of his grief was that he could not strike himself with sufficient severity in using the discipline, because his arm refused him this service. The fact is, that until then he had lacerated himself with unheard of rigour, and though the holy cruelties which he exercised on his body whilst in the world had been much moderated in Religion, nevertheless persons were often alarmed by the noise of the blows which he

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discharged on his body. His zeal against his flesh, which he regarded as his enemy, went so far that his Superiors were more than once obliged to be informed of it, in order to stop these pious excesses. He retained a long time the habit of going every month to solicit permission to perform certain penances, such as disciplines, hair-shirts, fasts, &c., which would soon have achieved the ruin of his constitution if all had been granted him that he desired; but as he perceived that several of his requests were refused, he increased them, so as to find in those which were allowed wherewith to satisfy his desire for sufferings. When he was eighty years of age he would use every argument with the Father Rector to allow him to fast, and whenever he succeeded he was overjoyed, as at some signal favour. Even at that age he would never take any breakfast without first asking leave. His usual saying was that he would have looked upon as lost a day on which he did not participate in the Passion of his Saviour by voluntary chastisements. It was not that he stood in need of these sorts of macerations in order to suffer, for besides his infirmities, which never gave him any relaxation, he was ingenious in making up for the penitential exercises which he was not allowed to practise, sometimes exposing himself to the rays of the intense heat of the sun, sometimes standing on one foot during entire hours, at other times seating himself on the edge of a bench, as if balancing it, and continued to live in an unwhole-

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some room for several years without any complaint: so that it may well be said of him, according to the Apostle, that he bore continually about his person the mortification of Jesus Christ. During the last years of his life, when confined to the infirmary, which he could no longer leave, he begged the infirmarian to go to the Superior and ask for him those permissions which he was unable to apply for himself, and he accomplished in his bed the penances allowed him, with an exactitude and severity which would have seemed a prodigy at his age, and in his state of health, if anything in the way of mortification could create astonishment when he was concerned. We must not omit to mention another kind of mortification, in appearance without much show, but in practice exceedingly grievous. The country where he lived, being very hot, abounded in gnats, mosquetos, fleas, &c. Against these tormentors he not only omitted to provide himself with the usual remedies, even by night, but never made any motion to rid himself of them, except when in company of others decency did not permit him to be seen covered with them, but abandoning himself to their desires, allowed them undisturbed to quench their thirst with his blood, his hands and face in a wretched plight, an object of compassion to the beholder. Always eager for sufferings, he cried with a holy transport—"O my sweet Lord Jesus, the love of my soul and delight of my heart! who could refuse to embrace pains and torments with joy for Thy love,

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since Thou hast embraced so many of them for love of us! O torments, I await you with open arms to rejoice with you and with my afflicted Jesus! O millions of deaths the most frightful, why do you not come since I desire you with so much ardour in order to sacrifice myself for my Jesus." These wishes were so sincere in the heart of the blessed Brother, that he often asked of God that he might endure all the torments of the Martyrs; and in this he was heard, as we shall see in the sequel, God being pleased to give His servant the merit of the most horrible tortures endured for His love. The severity of the trial will be easily conceived when we are informed that God permitted the devils to become his executioners; even as His Divine Majesty permitted Satan to go forth to tempt and afflict His holy servant Job; but if hell were not allowed to discharge all the effects of its hatred against him, it did not cease to furnish him with grievous afflictions, and to cause him often even the most excruciating pains.

It was not a light trial for our dear Saint to be obliged to struggle for many years against the enemy of his salvation in his spiritual exercises. Prayer constituted his strength and consolation, but the spirit of darkness strove to render it impracticable to him. To him the life and soul of the day was his morning meditation: this precious stream of living water his infernal foes now attacked, hoping to cut off its very fountain. Accordingly, as soon as he knelt down to prayer in the morning, he was seized with an

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unusual malady, but which it was evident came from the devil, for it was so inseparably attached to his morning prayer, that with its beginning, change, or end, it also began, changed, and ended. The signal for meditation was for our holy Brother the signal for his sufferings; for immediately he was seized and tortured in his whole frame with the most excruciating pains; by continuing to pray his sufferings increased, and the combat grew more fierce the more he struggled: his patience and love abated not: he prayed for help, perseverance, and resignation. He wished to suffer for God—it was his only desire in this world. Meanwhile the conflict grew worse; his pains and tortures became so active and piercing, that he expected to breathe his last. He threw himself on the ground, exhausted and gasping. But lo! no sooner was the signal for the end of meditation given, when, as if it was the signal of their retreat, all his raging pains ceased; he arose well, sound, and strong, as ready for the duties and work of the day as if nothing had happened to him. Nay, he sometimes after this performed so much, and in so short a time, that, astonished at himself, and suspecting some superior assistance and interference, he would say, "Immortal God, how is it possible that I could have done so much?" God thus, no doubt, rewarded his pains and toils endured for love of Him, by His sweet and powerful grace and concurrence. After ten years suffering this daily species of martyrdom, he continued to be favoured with

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numerous heavenly delights and consolations: his sentiments of God and knowledge of himself were wonderfully increased.

This was not the sole effect of the devil's malice against Alphonsus, nor the only exercise by which he tried his virtue. We shall only mention two other facts. As he ascended one day to an upper story of the College, having arrived at the top of the staircase, he felt himself suddenly struck on the face by a sort of winged monster of a horrible aspect, and emitting so intolerable a stench as to deprive him of his breath, and causing him to faint. He fell backwards, even to the lower story; but at the moment of his fall, having invoked our Lord, he was sustained by an invisible hand in such a manner that no injury resulted from it. The next day he was again precipitated from the top to the bottom of the stairs, in the presence of two Religious, who, surprised and frightened at so extraordinary an event, ran to him, fearing he was killed on the spot. They found him senseless, in which state he remained for a time, and on examining they perceived a dangerous wound in the head. It was necessary to carry him to his bed, where, by timely remedies, he soon recovered. The witnesses of his fall wished to know the cause of it, but he avoided telling them by diverting their attention to something else. He acknowledged afterwards to his confessor that the devil, furious against him, had tried twice to compass his death on these occasions, but that the almighty power of God had

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prevented it. On being asked the day following how he had passed the night, he said that he never recollected having suffered so much, and that he thought he had endured torments similar to those of hell.

To these persecutions of the enemy of God and His Saints must be added the sufferings the holy Brother had almost perpetually to endure from bodily infirmities. He acknowledged to the Father Rector, who questioned him concerning his health, that he suffered every night as much pain as if his body had been lacerated with a razor. "But what is the nature of the suffering?" continued the Superior. "Father," replied Alphonsus, "all that can be endured by those afflicted with violent pains in the stomach, the stone, the colic, and other maladies; but far from complaining of this trial, I would, on the contrary, be much afflicted if God delivered me from it. This is my habitual state, and I never mentioned it, as the rule only prescribes that information should be given of any sudden or extraordinary change of health." God recompensed the generous Brother by the sweetness of the consolations with which He overwhelmed him during prayer. The tempest of which we have spoken was succeeded by a profound peace, an interior joy, and a delightful relish which he experienced in prayer. Often the impression of these celestial favours communicated itself to his body and suspended all his pains. God relieved him miraculously several times without the assistance

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of physicians; in these instances it was not a perfect cure, but a sort of abatement of the malady which prepared this dear soldier of Jesus Christ for fresh combats. As for him, he continually offered himself to his Divine Master as a victim to be consumed by the fire of tribulation.

On one occasion in his sickness, while he was offering himself up as a victim to the divine will, lo! our Divine Redeemer, with His Virgin Mother, appeared to him with their countenances beaming with such resplendent light as to extinguish by its intensity the candle in the room. They both stood before him, and filled his soul with such inexpressible delight, healing his body and cheering his mind to such a degree as to leave not the smallest trace of sickness behind. A Father who slept in the adjoining room, wondering to hear voices at so unseasonable an hour of the night, opened the door to ascertain who were there, when suddenly the celestial vision disappeared. Alphonsus could not, after this, contain the overflowings of his joy. For several days he continued to speak of God and heavenly things with such sublime fervour, animation, and raptures, that all hearers hung upon his lips, while the eloquence of divine love flowed from him as from one descended from Heaven.

The heroic patience of Alphonsus was not only proved by the malice of the devil, severe corporal infirmities and domestic trials, but God was likewise pleased to permit that externs should exercise it on

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several occasions. Yet had His servant no other opportunity of acquiring merit than the fatigues and annoyances attendant on his office as porter for so many years, the manner in which he acquitted himself of this duty, and the evenness of mind which he always preserved, would have given sufficient proof of eminent sanctity. He was unceasingly on foot, obliged to traverse every part of the College to acquaint the Religious when they were called for, or to execute the various commissions with which he was intrusted, and recalled almost every instant to the door by the sound of the bell, he often found it necessary to return two or three times before he had acquitted himself of the first message. Far from appearing disheartened or impatient by these continual walks, he evinced the more joy, and hastened everywhere when his duty called him, replying at the time when the crowd was greatest with as much calmness and amiability as if he had only to transact business with one person. In the midst of such a diversity of cares and occupations, the slightest emotion was never observed in his gestures, the least alteration in his countenance, or the most trivial vivacity in his words. The children of the city, perhaps not more inconsiderate and giddy than anywhere else, took a malicious pleasure in trying the patience of the holy porter, often ringing the bell, then hiding themselves when he came to open the door, and then shouting with joy at his being made a fool of by them; the next minute the little troop

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would resume their amusement, Alphonsus never failing to appear at the sound of the bell, as if it were a summons from his Heavenly Master. He always manifested on these and similar occasions the sincerest joy at being made the sport of the thoughtless youth. He had not only frequently to endure these railleries whilst he was porter, but he received gross insults from a carpenter who was employed in the house; the man, not finding our Saint near at hand to let him out, burst forth into invectives against him with all the passion of a rude person, and lavished on him the most abusive epithets, regardless of the character, the age, or the virtue of the holy Religious. The latter, with the utmost meekness, endeavoured to pacify the enraged man, expressing himself in the most humble and affable manner, and having opened the door, he saluted the workman, and took leave of him with sincere affection and affability. The carpenter recovered from his first transports of passion, and entering into himself, admired the moderation of the servant of God, and recounting his fault with deep contrition to the Fathers of the College, he said to them—"You have got not a man, but an angel for your porter." On several other occasions our holy Brother had to suffer severely from one of the barbers employed at the College to shave the Religious. He was a young, insolent, and mischievous fellow, and took an extraordinary aversion to the Saint, and when in the act of shaving, or cutting his hair, he usually evinced

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a barbarous pleasure in wounding him in the face and head, so as to cause blood to flow copiously from the gashes. The inhuman man pretended that all this proceeded from awkwardness, and being reproached for his cruelty by those who witnessed it, he said it was a matter of indifference to Alphonsus, since he felt nothing, or rather, that he was glad to suffer. God permitted that of the two barbers who were employed in the College, the holy Brother should always be destined for this man, and he never avoided an occasion of enduring such hard treatment for the love of Him Who was led like an innocent Lamb to the slaughter. On being shavèd, the Saint thanked the barber in terms of the greatest affection, and with joy depicted on his countenance, he went with speed to the church, there to offer up his most fervent prayers for his cruel persecutor. This man, no wise softened by the goodness of the holy Brother, felt at last the anger of God avenging His servant, and by the stroke of a sword he lost the use of his mischievous arm. Not even improved by his wound, and being obliged to quit Majorca, he sailed into Italy, where he was stabbed with stillettos, and died, not, however, without duly receiving the last Sacraments through the mercy of God, obtained, as it is piously believed, by the prayers of our blessed Brother.

After the admission of Alphonsus into the Society, he ever observed the most precise exactness, not only in what regarded the substance of his vows, but in

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every and most minute particular. The love which he had for mortification inspired him with the highest esteem for Religious poverty, a virtue the perfect practice of which requires many sacrifices; he considered it as his mother, according to the spirit of his holy Founder, and deemed himself happy in feeling its effects. He usually said that it was the most efficacious means of detaching his heart from the things of the earth. So dear was it to him, that he joyfully suffered even necessary things to be taken away from him, or refused him. Even before his entrance into Religion, he had stripped himself of his property, and renounced everything in order to follow more freely his blessed Guide and Master, Jesus Christ. He deemed himself a beggar received into the Society through compassion and for the love of God. Hence the terms *mine* and *thine* were never heard from his lips; never a word about his clothes, diet, or lodging, save of thanksgiving; never a demand for anything he needed, considering it, as he said, a species of injustice for one bound and engaged to the service of God and of His servants, at any time to be occupied with care of himself. In food and clothes he always chose the worst for himself. He never could be induced to put on new clothes except by order of obedience. On one occasion, when the Superior ordered him to put on a new soutane, he upbraided himself in the following terms: "Have you not enough now, Alphonsus? O unworthy disciple of a Divine Master!

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Are you then come hither, wretched man, amongst such servants of God, happy in their poor manner of life and poverty of their Saviour, to shine in new garments? Unworthy indeed are you to share with them the merits and advantages of Religious poverty. Say, what can you expect in Heaven, whose labour is here rewarded? Offer up at least to God the wish, which obedience prevents you from executing, and amongst your brethren, who are cheerful and contented in their old worn clothes, do you blush for your new ornaments, and walk in sorrow amongst them, striving to compensate your loss of poverty by your patience." Thus did he expostulate with himself. The first room he occupied in the College was very damp in winter, and though he perceived that it was injurious to his health, he was resolved never to say a word of it to his Superior, because it seemed to him more conformable to the spirit of poverty and mortification to be silent on the inconvenience arising from it. He had in his humble cell no other furniture than a small wooden chair, which was at one time taken away and forgotten to be returned, he therefore passed an entire year without anything to sit upon but the boards of his bed. For devotional objects he had his crucifix, and a very small old image of the ever Blessed Virgin, disfigured with age and dust, which, from his always asking to carry it with him when he changed his room, it was universally supposed must have been dear to him on account of some special

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favour that had been granted to him through the intercession of the Queen of Heaven whilst he prayed before it. And this is the only article for which he was ever observed to entertain any particular attachment, and this was no doubt for the reason before hinted at. Some of the Fathers, who had arrived from Rome, made a distribution throughout the house of crosses, medals, beads, &c. When those that fell to the lot of Alphonsus were presented to him, he begged the Superior to take them back, as he did not wish to possess anything beyond what was absolutely necessary.

It was thus that our dear Brother profited of every opportunity to acquire new merit, demonstrating in his person that the virtues are sisters mutually aiding each other. The delicacy of Alphonsus with regard to holy poverty extended to the most minute details. A student of the College generally mended his pen; he remarked that it was so worn that there was no longer any part left to mend, and he substituted a better one. The Saint perceived it, and would not consent to accept it without obtaining permission, alleging the prohibition of the rule; the student replied that he need not have any scruple in such a trifle. Alphonsus replied that the rule also comprised small things, inasmuch as he was forbidden to receive anything without the Superior's leave. This may appear a trifle if we only pay attention to the object, but it is an admirable act of virtue if we consider the motives which influenced

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the holy Religious; and the Saints after all have become such by fidelity in little things. So scrupulous an attention in the most trivial observances presupposes a continual attention to the presence of God; our dear Brother never lost sight of it, and the confirmed habit he had acquired of conversing continually with the Divine Majesty, obtained for him the happy impossibility of forgetting Him for a single moment.

In a conference on this subject Father Coceius, who was then Rector, after having heard some Fathers of the College discuss the matter, ended by saying that the uninterrupted impression of the Divine presence appeared to him a privilege of the Angels and not of men, and that our natural frailty, the assaults of the devil, and the images of creatures, were for us a source of inevitable distractions; he concluded by saying that those obstacles could be in a great measure surmounted with the assistance of God's grace. The conference having thus terminated, Father Aguire, who was one of the most intimate and confidential friends of our Saint, wished to know his opinion; the holy Brother replied with modesty, that he had been much surprised at what the Superior said, but that it did not seem to him likely that the grace of the continual presence of God had never been granted to any Saint. Father Aguire then asked him what he experienced on this head, and Alphonsus, taken thus unawares, was with confusion obliged to acknowledge that in the course of a day his united

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distractions would at most amount to the time occupied in reciting the Apostles' Creed.

It was a little after his entrance into Religion that he made this avowal, and we may judge, after such a commencement, of the perfect and continual union with God to which he subsequently attained. His own words, speaking of himself, are a proof of this. "I know a person," said he, "who converses continually with Jesus and Mary; he imparts to them all that concerns his soul and body, incessantly imploring their assistance, in order that all his actions may be agreeable to God his Creator, which is his only desire. This familiarity with Jesus and Mary is tempered in his heart by a profound respect; he speaks to them, and they reply with admirable goodness, they communicate to him their wishes in such a manner that he experiences on these occasions the same sweetness which is felt by a child who reposes on the bosom of its mother. If there should occur to him any doubt or difficulty, he has recourse to Jesus and Mary, and instantly a vivid light dissipates all his darkness. Manifesting the state of his conscience one day to his Superior, he declared to him with simplicity that it scarcely ever happened that he was distracted from God in conversing with men. We learn from his writings that this exercise of the presence of God extended to all the powers of his soul; his memory placing Jesus and Mary before his eyes, his understanding penetrating into all that faith teaches us of the presence of God in all places, his will forming

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continual affections of divine love, and this last method is the most important, he remarks, for we cannot forget what we love.

Thus everything recalled his beloved to the Blessed Brother; it sufficed for him to cast his eyes on a pious picture to enter immediately into the sentiments of the most tender devotion towards the object which it represented. There was at the entrance to the College a very well executed painting of our Divine Saviour, at the bottom of which were inscribed two Latin verses, purporting that the worship rendered to the likeness should be referred to the adorable Person of the Word Incarnate. His Divine Master deigned Himself to explain to the holy Brother the meaning of this inscription. Since that time the sight of a pious picture immediately elevated his thoughts and his heart to Heaven, and on more than one occasion nothing more was necessary to raise him in an ecstacy.

The Rector observing that the good Brother, by his unremitting attention to God and to spiritual things, was daily consuming himself, enjoined him to lay aside his mental prayer, and to confine himself solely to his beads. He was obliged to offer himself great violence, in order to resist the divine impulses of his soul for meditation. He would say to God, "Excuse me, O Lord, since holy obedience does not permit me to expand to Thee my heart." But the more violence he offered himself to remove from him the impressions of divine love, the more he found himself absorbed in them. One night as he was

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beginning to recite his beads, he felt his soul wrapt in a most sweet meditation on the divine attributes; but because he scrupled to act in the least against obedience, he strove to divert his mind, and to struggle, as it were, with God until midnight. The Divine Goodness blessed his holy resistance with the sweetest and most refreshing slumber he ever enjoyed, in which, whilst his body reposed, his wakeful soul was rapt in ecstasy, and tasted the sweets of the heavenly Paradise. He awoke and found his infirm body recruited, his health perfectly restored, which the physicians had pronounced ruined beyond hope of recovery, from his excessive application to prayer and meditation. From that time the Superior remained fully persuaded that it cost more to our Saint to be separated and torn from his union with God, than to allow the flames of his love to dart up without restraint to their centre.

If the spirit of prayer accompanied our Brother everywhere, it was chiefly during the time especially appointed for that exercise that his contemplation was most sublime. When he had only commenced his spiritual career, he knew no other prayer but vocal. We have had occasion to relate how perfect his was, and what favours he received from Heaven in this holy exercise. But when he was initiated in all the secrets of the interior life, he abandoned himself entirely to mental prayer. His profound humility led him for a long time to occupy himself with his faults. This consideration made him shed

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many tears, and his contrition often vented itself in loud groans. His Divine Master was pleased to assuage this lively sorrow by the sweetest and most consoling assurances. One day whilst he was at prayer, exciting himself to the most lively contrition for his sins, it appeared to him that he was transported between two immense seas, the waters of which surrounded him on all sides; and it was intimated to him that the waters on one side depicted the ocean of his compunction, and on the other that of the divine mercies. He then appealed to God in the most imploring manner to let flow a drop of the waters of His tender mercy on his unworthy soul; a celestial voice repeated to him distinctly three times, "Give thyself no uneasiness, thy sins are already pardoned." He acknowledged afterwards that he never experienced consolation equal to that which inundated his soul in that happy moment.

Notwithstanding these words of comfort, Alphonsus was yet subject to many dreadful alarms as to his salvation; but these new trials were followed by new assurances more precious than the first. As the holy Brother on one occasion was preparing to approach the Holy Table, there occurred to him in the church some fault of his past life, slight indeed, but which appeared to him very considerable. Seeing that it was then impossible to recur to his confessor, he was much embarrassed, and finding no other means of relieving his mind than casting himself at the feet of her whose adorable Son he was about to receive,

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and declaring to her that he was ready to confess this sin publicly in the streets, if it were necessary, the ever Blessed Virgin Mother did not leave her servant long in this cruel dilemma. She appeared to him with a benevolent smile, and assured him that this sin, as well as all those he had ever committed, were pardoned, not only as to the guilt, but as to the punishment due to them, and to enhance the favour Jesus Christ Himself appeared at the same moment, embraced the Saint tenderly, pressed him to His divine Heart, and gave him the kiss of peace in confirming the words of His Blessed Mother.

Another time he was tormented by anxiety to know whether he had not deserved some ecclesiastical censure. This trouble lasted for a considerable time; and one day when it filled him with inexpressible uneasiness, he addressed the Lord in the bitterness of his soul—"What do you wish of me, O my God?" cried he, "I am ready to obey Your will, whatever it costs me." Having thus humbled himself, he was suddenly surrounded by a dazzling brightness, and seemed as if plunged in an ocean of light. At the same moment peace re-entered his heart, together with unbounded confidence and fear of God, His Divine Majesty intimating to him by a clear light and distinct knowledge similar to that of the Blessed in Heaven, that he was in His love and favour. It appeared to him that if he had then been on the point of dying, and that millions of demons had encompassed him, he would not have felt the least fear,

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so great was the confidence with which the Divine Redeemer inspired him. These sentiments never left the holy Brother afterwards, and he knew that he need dread nothing whilst this salutary fear of God pervaded his soul, and that it would serve him as an inaccessible rampart against the wiles of self-love.

Our blessed Brother, being deeply strengthened in holy humility, as well by his efforts as by the graces which had been their principle and recompense, entered into a more perfect path. The Mysteries of Jesus Christ became his great occupation, and he was particularly affected towards those of His Passion and Death. His prayer then consisted more in affections than in reasoning; scarcely had he commenced when he found himself intimately united with God and solely taken up with tenderly demanding all that he desired. "The best prayer," said he, "is that wherein the soul looks interiorly on God, Who is present to her, knowing that it is only from Him that she can hope for a remedy for her evils, she expects nothing from her own efforts, but relies solely on her Creator. This holy distrust in herself, and this perfect confidence in God, oblige Him to grant what she demands; for He promises in the Scripture to accomplish the desires of the poor in spirit and humble of heart. The Lord," said he also, "wishes that we demand His glory and the salvation of our souls, in order to grant us through that prayer all that is necessary for us. The means of obtaining everything from Him is to love Him tenderly, to love

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our neighbour, and sincerely to desire our spiritual good; then God will infallibly grant us our demands, because He loves us with an infinite love and He knows what is expedient for us. With that exception there is nothing for us to ask or to desire; we must leave to God the care of all."

The communications which Heaven entertained with Alphonsus became more intimate according to his faithful correspondence with the graces he received; he was soon, as he informs us, elevated to the highest degree of contemplation and of perfect union. "When this person placed himself in the presence of God," says he, speaking of himself, "he found himself instantly transported above all other creatures, and so lost in the Divine Being, that he was as if in a new world, where the Lord communicated to him a very clear knowledge of His divine perfections, and at the same time a most distinct view of himself. This double knowledge was not the effect of reasoning, but of celestial light; thence sprung up in him a love always new, accompanied by a humility still more profound, so that a combat, as it were, ensued between God and this favoured soul, the Sovereign Good elevating him more and more into His knowledge and love, and the soul sinking still deeper into the abyss of her own nothingness. The friendship and familiarity that subsisted between both was so great, that God seemed willing to manifest Himself to His servant in the same way that He does to the Blessed. Sometimes whilst only

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saying, 'O my well beloved! Thou art all mine, and I am all thine!' this person was ravished and absorbed in the infinite Being of God. 'Where is it,' cried he, 'that the ardours of my soul will conduct me? into the very furnace of divine love!' Who can explain this state? The soul then tastes God, is transformed into God, she enjoys with Him great silence and wonderful solitude; it is a celestial banquet, in which the soul is nourished by the divine perfections, where she is allowed to choose those which are the most agreeable to her. But how does she feed on her well-beloved? By placing Him in her heart, by harbouring Him within the inmost recesses of her soul, for purity of heart sees God, and devotion satiates herself with Him. How will the soul speak to Him Whom she possesses? Not with the noise of words, but with the ardent desires of the heart. When one is elevated to so sublime a degree, one prays with great tranquillity of mind, without weariness, and finding repose in that which would fatigue others. The communications of the soul with God impart to her ineffable sweetness, and relieve her even from bodily weakness."

Our Saint informs us that he had three principal exercises of the love of God; the first consisted in meditating on His greatness, and this view plunged him into such extraordinary admiration, that he remained without any sensation, in a profound ecstasy; he practised the second exercise in opening his heart to God, Who entered there into his soul,

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as the rays of the sun into an apartment, the casement of which is open. He explains thus the effects of this union; the love which is then experienced proceeds from God and penetrates the soul, and the soul which receives it directs it towards the Sovereign Good by a species of return. He makes use of a comparison to explain the third exercise. "It resembles," says he, "that of a little child who throws himself into the arms of his mother, and finds there his joy and repose, especially when this tender mother presses him to her bosom, and lavishes on him a thousand caresses, which the child returns in his own way. Then the soul is so elevated above creatures, that she despises them all, how perfect soever they may be, because God alone is infinite in His perfections. The more she knows that He is incomprehensible, the more joy it affords her; and in this state she remains in a certain ignorance of God, Who nevertheless makes her feel how sweet He is; the less she comprehends Him, the more amiable she finds Him; for the soul which is contained in this infinite Being sees Him perfectly without comprehending Him by the communication of a divine light."

All the above is extracted from the writings of the holy Brother. It was thought necessary to transcribe his words faithfully in a matter so sublime, and it is conceived that it would be failing in the respect due to him to substitute any other expressions than those which the Spirit of God dictated to the Saint. In

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the midst of rapturous and spiritual delights we discover everywhere the most beautiful sentiments of humility, mortification, and contempt of transitory things; whereas he declares that he would most willingly lay down a thousand lives, if he had them, to increase his love for God; and after having asserted that the Lord had apprised him that, with the assistance of divine grace, a man was capable of suffering all the tribulations of this world, and even the torments of hell, without falling into sin, he exclaims: "O my God! if I could serve Thee more perfectly in hell than I do here, precipitate me into its fiery furnaces, but bestow on me Thy grace, for my only desire is to please and serve Thee." And in another place he repeats this prayer, which escaped him in the fervour of his devotion: "My well-beloved, give me a wound of love, but let it cause me pain, in order that I may suffer for Thee. O my love! do not abandon me, for I could not live a moment without Thee. Why cannot I die for Thy love? O my God! Thou knowest that I would willingly suffer all the labours and pains of this world, and even the torments of hell for Thy love? Why have I not died for love in acknowledgment for all Thy benefits? Where shall I find an infinite love such as Thou meritest?" He remained after these and similar transports absorbed in God, unable to utter a single word. We will here mention some very remarkable favours which Alphonsus received, and which will still better exemplify the efficacy of his prayer.

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It happened several times during his sleep that he continued the prayer he had begun in the daytime. He relates that one night whilst he slept, he found himself entirely consumed with the fire of divine love, and remained for an hour in that state, similar to the mysterious repose of the Spouse in the Canticles. Having awaked and fallen asleep again, his prayer recommenced with his sleep, and lasted until the moment of his awaking; his body was not at all wearied or inconvenienced, but, on the contrary, more disposed for active pursuits than if there had been nothing supernatural in his repose. Our holy Brother remarks that this is a particular grace, because the soul is then united to God so much the more perfectly, as the senses which are lulled can prove no obstacle to this unspeakable intercourse. There are in the Holy Scriptures examples of prayers addressed to God by persons under the influence of sleep: such was that of Solomon. And the Lord Himself often communicated His will to the Patriarchs and Prophets whilst they slept. Alphonsus received in prayer favours yet more astonishing; he was transported one day into Heaven, and found himself in the midst of the Blessed. He could distinguish them one from the other, as if he had already passed a great number of years amongst them. It frequently occurred during his prayer that he was raised in spirit, with inexpressible celerity, in such a manner that he seems to have pierced through the heavens, and then he was encompassed

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by a light more dazzling than that of the sun. At the beginning of January, 1614, the holy Brother was ravished into Heaven, and he passed several days in a species of contemplation which seemed more to appertain to the state of blessed spirits than to mortals; he found himself placed between Jesus and Mary, and conversed with them, not as he ordinarily did by a most profound sentiment of their presence, but in a manner entirely spiritual, which belongs in some measure to the glorified state; finally it was given him to contemplate the Divine Essence, not face to face like the elect, but as he himself explains, as if of two veils which covered it, one had been withdrawn that he might see better, and though this view was imperfect, and God only appeared through a cloud to His servant, our dear Brother unhesitatingly asserts that it is impossible to express or even conceive the happiness he experienced in that blissful moment.

He had received in his heart during his hours of rapturous prayer, one of those wounds of divine love with which favoured and enamoured souls have ever languished. As for instance, the blessed Mother St. Teresa of Jesus, the Blessed St. Francis of Assisium, and others. Hence he darted towards God, like so many fiery arrows, groans and desires of a heart panting to join the object of its affections. He studied nothing but to please his God; to increase one degree more in His love, he would have given not only one, but a thousand lives. He

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was often heard exclaiming in the fire of his ardent love—"Jesus and Mary, dear objects of my affections, I wish to suffer and to die for love of you." So close was his union of love with our Lord Jesus and His Blessed Mother, that he would run like a simple child to them in his troubles, and they would sweetly answer his holy ardour either by mental illustrations, or affectionate words.

It is certain that the prayers of Blessed Alphonsus were so efficacious with the Divine Majesty, that whatever he petitioned, especially regarding the salvation of souls, he obtained. Hence it was that so many persons recommended themselves, or their affairs and difficulties, to his prayers. The Viceroy, unable to subdue and allay some violent factions and dissentions that had broken out in a certain part of the island, requested two of the Fathers of the Society to go thither and preach to them; but they, despairing of success with the furious and ungovernable people, whom they well knew, recommended the affair to the prayers of Brother Alphonsus. The Fathers then departed, placing full confidence in the prayers of the servant of God. When they arrived in the village they met with such a kind reception and found all so docile and pliant to their exhortations, that in a short time they were able to adjust everything according to their pleasure, and re-establish peace and harmony in the place. A Father of the College was once called to attend a miserable dying sinner who had absolutely refused to listen to anything con-

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cerning his eternal salvation. For his good fortune, the Father's companion was Brother Alphonsus, who animated with zeal and compassion for this unhappy man, retired into a corner of the room, and in a most earnest manner begged of God to grant in His mercy a ray of the divine light to the mind of the miserable creature; when suddenly his hardness was softened, he yielded himself a willing and contrite penitent to the hands and will of the Priest, and made an entire confession of his sins.

A poor man was molested with a most violent temptation; he consulted our Saint and begged his prayers. The charitable Brother implored God to send *him* the temptation, and to free the man from it. God signified to him that in place of it he should suffer a pain no less vexatious. Accordingly he sent him a most excruciating spasm in the stomach, which causing His servant Alphonsus to suffer most violently in the body for several days, liberated the tempted man from the trial of his soul.

No resolution of importance was ever adopted by the Superiors without first taking the opinion and requesting the prayers of this humble, but enlightened servant of God.

It is also a remarkable circumstance in his life that, whenever absorbed in the contemplation of heavenly things, when his whole mind and soul in those ecstatic raptures were so forcibly transported as even to raise his body some distance from the ground and deprive him of the use of his senses, yet on these occasions

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he ever heard the sound of the bell that called him to the gate, and hastened as if at the voice of God, without any mistake or absence of mind. Several persons declared that, when in their youth they frequented the schools of the College, they used from boy-like curiosity to go and watch Brother Alphonsus at his prayers, and saw him sometimes raised from the ground on those occasions.

It was especially at the foot of the altar our dear Brother obtained the divine fire which burned in his soul. Jesus hidden in the Blessed Eucharist was the object of his dearest affections; whenever his occupations left him a leisure moment he went to pass it before the Adorable Sacrament. There his soul overflowed with sentiments of the most tender devotion; streams of tears often flowed from his eyes, and he appeared to be consumed with love, like a burning lamp before the sacred tabernacle, which contained his only treasure. The spectators could scarcely fail to experience some small share of the lively faith and celestial charity which animated him when they contemplated him in his old age, with a feeble and debilitated body, prostrate, nevertheless, in the most respectful attitude, and scarcely able to tear himself away from the holy temple. Alphonsus would have been willing to feed every day on the Bread of Life, but his directors did not permit him to communicate so often; he tried to indemnify himself by inviting God into his heart by the ardour of his desires. He

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never assisted at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass without making a spiritual communion with all the fervour of which he was capable, but when there was question of uniting himself sacramentally to Jesus Christ, then he collected all his strength to prepare an agreeable dwelling for his Divine Guest. He commenced his preparation twenty-four hours before the time, forming continual acts of all the virtues, and, however great the purity of this innocent soul, he never presumed to go to Holy Communion without having cleansed himself from the least stain by the most exact confession and the most lively sorrow; on seeing him advance towards the tribunal of penance, with compunction depicted on his countenance, one would have imagined him to have been a great sinner overburdened with the weight of his crimes. At last, when the moment so ardently desired approached, the humble Brother, convinced that, notwithstanding all his preparation, he would be always unworthy of the grace he was about to receive, conjured the most Blessed Mother of God and all the Saints to supply for the deficiency of his disposition, in order that he might participate with profit in the sacrament of salvation; and the witnesses who deposed in the process of his beatification, declared that, at the moment of communicating, his countenance shone with a supernatural light, and his features underwent so extraordinary a change that he was no longer to be recognized. Immediately after having received his God he retired

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to a distance, and abandoned himself to the effusions of his love and to the most lively transports of joy and gratitude.

At these times the saintly Brother generally pictured his heart as a vast hall in which were erected two thrones; on one was seated our Divine Redeemer, and on the other His most holy Mother, for he could never separate these divine objects of all his affections. Remaining in spirit at their feet, he recited three times the *Gloria Patri*, then the hymn *Te Deum*, and when he came to these words, "The heavens and the earth are full of Thy Majesty," he invited all creatures to join with him in singing the praises of his God, and in rendering Him a thousand acts of thanksgiving. He was almost always at this moment inundated by a torrent of light, and so replenished with unspeakable delight, that according to what he writes, it is impossible for man to find expressions or even ideas to transcribe the content which his soul experienced in the midst of a multitude of celestial spirits who praised and adored their God really present in his heart. On All Saints' Day, 1612, our dear Brother prepared to communicate with his Brethren at the Community Mass; he implored with extraordinary fervour the friends of God who reigned in Heaven, conjuring them to obtain for him on this great solemnity, of which they were the object, all the virtues which could ornament his soul and render it agreeable in the eyes of his Divine Spouse; his charity inspired him also to beg the same grace for

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all the Religious of the house. After communion his Divine Master deigned to testify to His dear Alphonsus that his prayer was heard. He showed him in a sensible manner His presence in the hearts of all those who had just received Him, so that he perceived the Saviour resplendent with glory, whole and entire in each of the Religious. Oh, what a sweet encouragement is this for Religious in particular, and for all Christians in general, to pray for one another at these most solemn moments! This sacrament of union was a celestial bond, which united their hearts together in that of their Blessed Lord and Creator. Our Saint comprehended all the extent of such a favour, and, filled with confusion, he conjured the Lord not to conduct him by this wonderful path, but by that safer one of trials, sufferings, and crosses.

After the consecration, at which time he was so filled with the fire of divine love burning in his breast, as to manifest it on his countenance, he always renewed his Religious vows, asking pardon of God for all his infidelities in the observance of them, and grace to keep them with increased perfection for the future. After reciting the formula of his vows, he thus concluded—"If this my poor offering, O Lord, be any ways agreeable in Thy sight, accept it as a token of my gratitude for the grace of having been admitted into Thy holy Society, in which Thou knowest with what joy I live, and how I prefer this single favour to all

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others that men could possibly wish or conceive for me. Oh, that I could for this grace love Thee with an infinite love! Oh, that I could return Thee infinite thanks for this and all other favours which Thy liberality has heaped upon me."

Our Saint did not receive fewer graces in those moments of the day in which he visited his Blessed Lord in the sanctuary. On the second Sunday after Pentecost, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed during the entire day in the church of the College, on the occasion of a particular solemnity; Alphonsus scarcely quitted the feet of his Beloved on that day. While he abandoned himself to all the tenderness of his devotion, he was struck by a brightness similar to that of a flash of lightning, but which instead of vanishing remained in all its lustre; this ray of light issued from the adorable Eucharist, where Alphonsus distinguished Jesus present in His Sacrament; and his heart was consumed with such devouring flames of love, that he thought they would have deprived him of life; but at the same time he entered into a holy distrust of himself, fearing that all this was an illusion. Then the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, appeared at the side of her adorable Son Jesus, in the midst of this dazzling glory. "What dost thou fear, Alphonsus?" said she; "why hast thou not more confidence in my Son?" And the Saviour, turning towards His Blessed Mother, said to her, "This fear pleases Me." At that moment Alphonsus

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comprehended how agreeable a filial fear is to God. He afterwards heard a voice pronouncing clearly these words, "Thou shalt walk on the asp and the basilisk, and thou shalt trample under thy feet the lion and the dragon." By this was indicated to him the empire which he was to obtain over the devils. The same voice added, "They shall carry thee in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone," designating the assistance he should receive from the holy Angels, by whose aid he would avoid sin: after which the vision disappeared.

The faith and charity of Alphonsus derived new strength when he assisted at the august Sacrifice of our Altars; he never deprived himself of this happiness, and when he was seriously ill and confined to bed, nothing less than a positive order from the Superior could prevent him from making an effort to go to the church to assist at Mass. He especially ambitioned the honour of serving it, and considered it a function producing admirable fruits, by affording an opportunity of treating more intimately with Jesus. During several years he was charged with the fulfilment of the office of clerk at the Mass of the Father Superior: when he repaired to the sacristy at the appointed hour, his face was so radiant with joy that all who met him said, without fear of mistake, "Alphonsus is going to serve Mass." Several witnesses have deposed juridically that they went to the College church at that hour with the intention of being edified by the fervour of Alphonsus, and that they were so

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affected by it, that when the good Brother served several Masses successively, which frequently happened, they could not resolve to leave, such consolation did their piety find in the contemplation of the holy Religious. A person who died in the odour of sanctity at Majorca, has likewise attested that she perceived rays of light which issued from the countenance of Alphonsus while he served at the altar.

There was a sort of rivalry amongst the Priests of the College, to obtain that our Saint should serve them during the divine mysteries, and they never failed to ask for him when they wanted to solicit any particular favour from Heaven.

We read of several signal favours which the blessed Brother received during the Holy Sacrifice. Jesus Christ appeared one day to him at the Gospel side, clothed in a long robe, and displaying in His whole exterior, more especially in His eyes, the most admirable modesty. Our dear Brother felt that his Divine Master wished to give him an example of this virtue; he could not withdraw his eyes from those of his heavenly Model, wherein he discerned, as in a mirror, all the treasures of the Divinity. Twelve years after, the impression of this miraculous apparition was so vivid, as he relates, that the sole recollection of it composed his interior and exterior according to the rules of the most exact modesty, and operated in his soul the effect of the most fervent prayer. He saw, another time, our Divine Redeemer in the form of a

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lovely infant in the hands of the Priest who distributed the Blessed Eucharist, smiling on each of the communicants, and the vision was renewed in each of the particles which he took from the holy ciborium. Finally, he had a third vision, which appeared especially to relate to Father Aguire, before named. In giving communion to the people he had let a host fall by accident; afflicted by this misfortune, he would not say Mass the next day in public, but in a private oratory, where Alphonsus served him. The latter perceived our Blessed Lord, Who overwhelmed the celebrant with caresses, and bestowed on him marks of the tenderest love. Our Saint hastened to tell this vision to the Superior, who ordered him to relate all to Father Aguire for his consolation.

It is impossible to love Jesus truly without loving His Blessed Mother also; this devotion to that ever-blessed one was dear to the tender heart of our beloved Brother, as the practice of obedience was his distinctive virtue. It is impossible to express the affection he bore towards the Queen of Heaven; he looked upon her as his mother, but a celestial mother, whom he cherished in proportion to the ineffable perfections which he discovered in her. He did not know what to devise in order to testify his filial devotion to her. Whenever he could obtain permission, he fasted rigorously every Saturday in her honour, and he prepared for her festivals by mortifications of every kind, in which he would have

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kept no bounds, had he not been restrained. He had always his beads in his hands, and after his death it was perceived that the thumb and forefinger of his right hand were covered with a hard skin, produced by the continual pressing of the jewels of this holy crown of our Blessed Queen. He had composed several very devout prayers, which he often addressed to his amiable Mistress. She was incessantly present to the eyes of his mind. He asked nothing of God but in the name of Mary, and he recommended this holy practice to others.

Father Francis Collin, who has written in Spanish the life of our Saint, being on the point of quitting Majorca, where he had passed six years with Alphonsus, entered his cell in the evening to take leave of him. He found the holy Brother so ravished in an ecstasy, that he kissed his feet through veneration for the servant of God, who, having just come to himself at the moment, and seeing a Priest in this humble posture, was filled with confusion. Father Collin, without giving him time to make any reflection, said to him: "Brother, I am going away; leave me a spiritual remembrance which will recall to me the years we have passed together." The Saint replied, without hesitating, "When you wish to obtain anything from God, ask it with confidence in the ever Blessed Virgin, and be sure of obtaining it."

Our dear Saint's familiarity with the most Blessed Virgin and her adorable Son was such as is wont

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to be amongst friends one to another, or rather, as of a little child with its father and mother, and, indeed, he esteemed them as such, who afforded him so often their corporal presence. He spoke to them (but especially on one occasion, when they entered into his heart) with such devotion and sweetness, that he caused the same effect in all those who heard him, whom he exhorted wholly to forget themselves, and only to delight in his most sweet Lovers, Jesus and Mary, for so he was wont to call them, because they would be careful both of his body and soul.

But if our pious Brother counselled all those who approached him to have recourse to the most holy Mother of God in all their wants, neither did he neglect any opportunity of eulogizing her, or of sustaining her privileges. He honoured with a particular devotion the Immaculate Conception of the Queen of Virgins, and her glorious Assumption into Heaven. He defended, with as much zeal as solidity, those articles of pious belief, convinced that it imported equally to the honour of the Mother and of the Son, that the soul of Mary should have been pure from the moment of her conception, and that her original body should be at present in Heaven. The Immaculate Mary seemed to be pleased with the ardour with which Alphonsus sustained the interests of her glory; she bid him twice to write all the prayers which he addressed to her Immaculate Conception, and inspired him with the firm resolution of being everywhere its apostle and

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panegyrist. He said that it was a sure means of pleasing Jesus Christ to believe that His Mother had been conceived without stain, and to honour her in this quality, for that the whole glory of the Mother redounded on the Son; that the Blessed Virgin appreciated much this veneration of her; that the pious zeal of propagating and encouraging devotion in this point was highly acceptable to her, productive of much fruit in souls, and a great support and defence of virtue, especially of chastity, and a certain pledge of the never-failing protection of the Mother of God; for that by this devotion towards her, she was in a manner engaged to confer the above favours. Although such a friend to modest taciturnity, yet, whenever he heard anything contrary to the sanctity or belief of this great mystery, his zeal became unusually enkindled as he asserted and defended the contrary. Not content with reciting daily the Office of the Immaculate Conception, which he did for forty years, he took copies of it, which he distributed to the pupils of the College, assuring them that this prayer would be very useful to them to preserve purity of heart. He did not even hesitate to aver that the Society of Jesus had been partly founded for the defence and propagation of this devotion, adding that if the Father Superior would allow it, he would go and preach it in the streets and public places. This declaration concerning the Society he made with so great and unwonted affection, as to assure those who heard

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him that he spoke it not of himself, but had received it by revelation from Heaven.

Hearing one day two Fathers of the College discussing the question, he approached them, and joining in the conversation, "I know," said he, in a confident tone, "that the Mother of God was conceived without sin." "And from whom have you learnt it then?" asked one of the Fathers. "From the most Blessed Virgin herself," replied the Saint. Our Blessed Lady was pleased to testify by an astonishing prodigy how agreeable this zeal of Alphonsus was to her. The Festival of the Immaculate Conception was celebrated at Majorca, in 1586, with great solemnity. On that day a hurricane similar to those which sometimes ravage the Antilles, came suddenly on the city, and the violence of the gale was such that on all sides were heard lamentations, denoting the fear that existed of the most terrible accidents. A wall of the College had just fallen, and several persons had been buried under its ruins. As all the Religious hastened to leave the house, which was every moment in danger of being blown down, the Father Superior, perceiving our Saint going out with the rest, said to him: "What are you doing, dear Brother? Go quickly to the church, and beseech the Lord to stop this terrible scourge." He obeyed, and scarcely had he knelt before the altar, and implored the succour of the Blessed Virgin, when the tempest suddenly ceased, a serene brightness spread itself suddenly over the heavens, calm over

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the ocean, and peace over the island, and thus they were in time to draw out alive from under the ruins those who must otherwise necessarily have become the victims of this terrible visitation.

The devotion of the blessed Brother towards the triumphant Assumption of the glorious Mother of God into Heaven, was also recompensed in a very extraordinary manner. Whilst he was at Segovia, he had been transported in spirit into Heaven the very day of this festival. Mary received him in the midst of the celestial court, having on her right hand our Saint's Angel Guardian, and on her left St. Francis of Assisi, one of his most signal protectors. The Queen of Heaven then presented her favourite to the Eternal Father; and the reception, full of kindness, which he received from his Sovereign Lord and Master overwhelmed him with such lively joy that, quite beside himself, he could no longer recollect whether he was in the streets or going out of the church. He relates another vision which he had on the same festival during his stay at Majorca, which he himself described in his rendering an account of conscience (speaking, according to his custom, in the third person). "It happened after some years, that being in an ecstasy upon the day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, beholding the multitude of Angels that assisted her, and how, as soon as she had breathed out her most holy soul, she was accompanied by an army of blessed spirits, and with an inexpressible gladness and joy was carried to Heaven,

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and that, quickly arrived there, the heavens themselves opened to receive their Queen, and this person followed in spirit those holy Angels, and could not detach himself from them, nor from this great Lady, and therefore he entered also with them, with the most precious treasure of the soul of Mary. And this was the first feast that they made to the Mother of God—accompanying her from earth to Heaven. The second feast was after the heavens had opened, and the great Virgin, entering with the said Angelic army, was received with the highest festivity by other innumerable Angels that there waited for their Queen and Lady. What this reception might be, and how unutterable, and what the festivities and rejoicings made to their Queen and Lady, who shall be able to recount—these being feasts totally celestial, made to the Queen of Heaven, and Mother of God, and Empress of the Angels! These Heavenly delights are better tasted and understood purely with the spirit, when God communicates them to souls in some rapture. Let it suffice. This person, as I consider, was in an ecstasy, and these things cannot be described conformably to our mode of comprehension, we being material and corporeal, and they totally spiritual. . . . The third feast, more solemn than the other two, was when she was presented to the Most Holy Trinity. At that time, so great was the gladness and joy of all the citizens, that all together intoned their canticle, after the manner of Angels, not of men—that is,

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totally spiritual. This person saw and rejoiced in all these things, being present at this great feast, having been spiritually transported there. There is no human intellect that can comprehend it, since this Heavenly feast hath no similitude with those of earth. Although the place was so immense, the Angels so innumerable and distant apart, yet the feast and music were spiritually tasted with joy, as though all were congregated together. In such a feast this person greatly rejoiced, finding himself amongst those blessed spirits. Besides which, at one glance, in the same time and instant, he saw them all, and how they mutually rejoiced, and each one in particular, as though his own soul had been entirely in each one of them, and all in all; and he lost nothing of the joy of so solemn a feast, thus made to the Virgin our Lady. What, if one Angel alone is capable of producing music so sweet as to ravish the human intellect in such a manner that for many years a soul would be unable to return to itself, how great must have been the music of all the citizens of Heaven together, most skilful in it, on account of their inexplicable love towards their Lady Queen! A thing so sublime, so divine, no language on earth is able to tell." The Saint adds—"The ecstasy happened in the time of evening, in the College of Majorca, the person being in his room, that looks into the courtyard." He concludes—"The person was transported into Heaven to see similar things, that it was clearly an ecstasy, purely spiritual, not corporeal." Terminating

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with saying that—"He does not know how long it lasted." On another occasion, after one of those dreadful attacks on the part of his infernal enemies in order to cheer and comfort him, she bade Angels sing for him with the melodious music of citherens and harps, those words of St. David, *Quoniam in me speravit liberabo eam*—"Because he has hoped in Me, I will deliver him."

As Alphonsus was continually occupied with the ever Blessed Virgin, he spoke of her also on all occasions, and had received a particular gift of inspiring confidence in the Mother of grace and mercy. Whenever that was the subject of conversation, he appeared as if transported out of himself; and on one occasion, in the chamber of the Father Rector, the latter having pronounced accidentally the name of Mary, "I feel that she comes," cried he, "behold her! behold her!" The Superior wishing to put no obstacle to the celestial visit by his presence, retired, and left the place to the Queen of Heaven. It would take too long to relate the testimonies of a truly maternal tenderness which Mary lavished on her child of predilection, we shall only transcribe the most remarkable. Our Saint was subject to a most frightful temptation to despair; he had recourse to the recital of the Rosary, and to render this weapon more efficacious, at each *Ave* he added to the words, "Holy Mary, Mother of God," these others, "Remember me." The combat became more and more furious. At last Alphonsus, pressed

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by his enemy, raised his voice and cried out with renewed energy, "Remember me, O my Mother, come to my aid; I perish." Immediately the Divine Mother manifested herself, and the storm at once subsided. The devil suggested to him one day that he would lose his time in acquiring merits, since all his efforts would terminate in a fall so great that it would scandalize as much as his example had hitherto edified. The spirit of darkness acted so much on the senses and the imagination of our Saint that the case appeared to him certain; his trouble was inexpressible, he invoked Mary; she appeared and said to him with affection, "Alphonsus, my dear son, where I am thou hast nothing to fear." One day that he was overwhelmed with bodily pain and mental sufferings, a troop of demons appeared to him under the most horrid forms, and after having insulted him a thousand ways, "Where is thy Mary?" they demanded with infernal irony. The Divine Mother did not abandon her child, she appeared to him in all her glory, and the devils, confounded, fled precipitately. In another apparition Mary deigned to say to her happy servant, "Alphonsus, how much I love Thee!" What an exclamation from the lips of the Queen of Heaven. This was not enough; she was pleased to favour her servant in a yet more extraordinary manner than that which we have just stated.

Whilst Alphonsus recited his Rosary he saw the Divine Mother descend from Heaven with her Son;

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both of them took possession of his heart, and what is most astonishing is, that this vision was entirely intellectual, and the senses had no share in it. During twelve entire years Alphonsus had these amiable guests always present. We must, however, admit that perhaps the most singular favour which our Saint received from his august Queen, was that which we are going to relate. The Fathers of the College went sometimes to say Mass and give instructions at the Castle of Belleview to the family of Don Peter Paz, to whom it belonged. The holy Brother one day accompanied Father Matthias Barasta there. The castle was situated about a mile from the city of Majorca, on the summit of a hill, and was very difficult of access; besides it was in summer, and Alphonsus who was then very old, suffered much in his feet. The Father recited his office as he went on, and the Saint followed him with difficulty, offering to God his fatigue and the perspiration with which he was inundated. Our Blessed Lady suddenly appeared, and approaching her dear Alphonsus with an air of affectionate solicitude, she wiped with a very fine white linen cloth the forehead and face of her servant, and communicated to him at the same time supernatural strength to finish his journey. Arrived at the castle, Alphonsus retired to a distance and fell into an ecstasy which lasted all the time the Father was occupied in fulfilling the functions of his ministry. One of the nieces of Don Peter, being then

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Viscountess of Rocabetti, related since, that she had seen the holy Brother in this rapture, and that he was so insensible to all that passed around him, that doves had several times perched on his arms and head without his perceiving it.

We may here observe that besides his tender devotion to the Blessed Mother of God, he had a great union with the Angels and Saints, with whom he conversed both in Heaven and on earth, and especially with twenty-four of the more principal, amongst whom he divided the twenty-four hours, to treat with and recommend himself unto them, wherein he never failed though in the night and in his sleep, awaking duly at the beginning of every hour to perform his accustomed devotions; which diligence of his our Saviour recompensed by discovering unto him His glory, wherein he saw more perfectly and knew all the Blessed in Heaven, their names and particulars, as if he had conversed with them all his lifetime.

The favours of the Blessed Mother of God having for their principal end the sanctification of our Saint, she made known to him as a signal benefit, that the surest means of arriving at the perfection of the holy state he had embraced, was the exact and constant practice of *obedience*. He profited so well by the lessons of his heavenly Mistress, that in this virtue he illustrated everything most wonderful that is recounted of the ancient Fathers of the desert, and we cannot better terminate this picture of the

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Religious life of the holy Brother than by proposing him as the model of a virtue which he carried even to heroism, and without which there can be no solid piety, nor even true Christianity. The illuminations which Alphonsus had received from Heaven made him see clearly that when there is question of obedience, it does not suffice to conform exteriorly to the orders of Superiors, if the will and judgment do not likewise submit. He said that God rejects a certain reasoning obedience, which does not merit the name, since it only yields by a species of necessity, and which always murmurs. "It was not thus," added he, "that Abraham obeyed God; and his sacrifice was perfect, because he immolated his reason to the accomplishment of the divine will, and in obeying he believed against all hope." Thus did he distinguish, with his holy Founder, a sort of obedience which he called of faith, because it sees the commands of God in that of the Superior, founded on these words of Jesus Christ—"He who hears you hears Me." "There is neither wisdom nor prudence," he added, "otherwise than in this blind submission, which cannot err, since we therein follow the example of Him Who was obedient unto death, even unto the death of the Cross." The object, design, and nature of the orders of obedience are apt too often to excite our curiosity and conjectures, but with our Saint no other thought occurred but that of executing what was ordered. Neither the cause, object, nor utility of the injunction, nor the

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person of him who ordered, but God alone, was before his eyes, Whom he viewed in his Superior almost as forcibly as the Angels behold Him in Heaven; whose ready obedience, void of all reasonings, those who imitated, he used to say, surmounted difficulties otherwise insuperable in the execution of their orders, by a kind of unexpected miracle. Hence it was, that as obedience only was before his eyes in what he did, he sometimes performed things which those who are not guided by prudential and well-weighed motives and reasons may tax as childish or foolish. What a consolation to a Religious who shall all his life have practised this meritorious obedience! But also what confusion for him who shall not have regulated all his actions on such principles! God addressing Himself to this soul when she appears before His dread tribunal, will make to her these terrible reproaches—"To whom have you made vows of obedience on entering into Religion, to Me or to men? and if it was to Me that you promised obedience, why have you done the will of man instead of doing Mine?" "The effect of blind obedience," continues Alphonsus, "is to submit the will of man to the disposition of the divine will, so that one can no longer do, or even desire anything, but what is conformable to the good pleasure of God. It is in that, that perfection consists, and God communicates to those who obey in this manner a celestial light, enabling them to see clearly the orders of God in those of the Superior, so that the

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entire universe would in vain endeavour to induce them to disobey. Such," concludes our Saint, "is the obedience of the Angels in Heaven." The blessed Brother acted constantly on these maxims which the Spirit of God had taught him.

One day the sacristan entreated him to descend without permission to a gallery, to please some strangers of distinction who asked to see him. Alphonsus replied in an elevated tone of voice—"You insist uselessly, Brother, for though heaven and earth should conspire together they would not make me violate the least of my rules." When he received an order, from whatever quarter it came, he said interiorly to God—"Yes, my Lord, I go to accomplish faithfully what Thou hast commanded," and he applied himself then with as much diligence to fulfil what was ordered as if he had the Divine Majesty present before his eyes, or that his Sovereign Master had personally manifested to him His holy will. Thus he no longer calculated, nor did he think of difficulties, taking the words of the command in the whole extent of the sense which presented itself to his mind; it was usually said in the College that the Superiors ought to be very careful as to the order they gave him, because Alphonsus would execute all to the letter, without the slightest omission; and in effect he often repeated, that to command with prudence and discretion was the duty of the Superior, but to obey with punctuality was that of the inferior.

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The following are some remarkable examples of the simplicity and exactitude with which he obeyed.

A Priest who knew the Saint came to the College to see him when he was unwell; the Superior sent for the good Brother—"Go say two words to Don John Pascal, who asks for you." Alphonsus, without delay, descended to the parlour, and after having said to the ecclesiastic who thus waited for him, *Deo gratias*, he made a profound reverence and retired. The Priest was at first astonished at so brief a salutation, but when it was explained to him why Alphonsus had disappeared so promptly, though he could not help smiling, he was very much edified, and the Superior hearing of it desired Alphonsus to go and spend the usual time with his friend. For the space of many years he shut a door through which he had occasion continually to pass, each time, because his Superior had once asked him why he did not shut it.

One day Father Peter Gil, then Superior of the College, passing in the choir of the church before the blessed Brother who was seated on a bench, the latter about to stand up was prevented by the Superior, who said to him—"Do not stir, remain sitting where you are." Alphonsus obeyed, but took the order to the letter, and remained in the same place all the morning. The hour of the first and second meal passed without his making his appearance, at length the Superior was informed that the good Brother had not come to the refectory all day. The Father

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reflecting whether he had given him any order which could detain him elsewhere, remembered the words which had escaped him in the church. "Go and see," said he, "whether Alphonsus is not still in the choir." He was actually there, and on receiving the new order from the Superior, he repaired immediately to the refectory. We read several similar facts in the process of the beatification of the Saint, and though such literal obedience might evince singularity in a less perfect Religious, yet when combined with such admirable virtue as that of the holy Brother, it ought to excite the admiration of all those who do not judge the things of God by the prudence of the flesh, and who recognize the highest wisdom in the divine folly of the Cross.

The Superior of the College wishing to try how far the obedience of the blessed Brother would extend in the most difficult things, called for him, and assuming a serious tone, said—"You are become useless and a burthen to the College; you ought then to leave it, since it is unjust that the house should any longer maintain one who renders no service to it." Our Saint, without evincing the slightest emotion or replying a single word, bowed respectfully and went for his cloak to depart, "because," said he to the porter who asked him where he was going, "I have received orders to leave the College." The Brother porter, who had been previously instructed how to act, replied—"I will not open the door for you, return to your room

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and occupy yourself as usual." When what had passed was known in the house all were in admiration at the promptitude of his obedience, and they could not suppress their astonishment that an old man, overwhelmed with infirmities, should at a single word from his Superior prepare himself, without a reply, to obey, when by doing so he would have exposed himself to the most abject destitution.

The above was not the only instance of this nature which manifested the perfect obedience of Alphonsus. The Father Rector said to him one day—"Go and embark," without adding anything further; the Saint did not even re-enter his chamber, but deemed it his duty to repair at once to the port. A Brother recalled him under the pretext that the Father Rector had something to communicate to him. As soon as the latter saw Alphonsus, he said—"Where were you going, Brother, and on what vessel would you have embarked, since there is not one now in the port?" Alphonsus replied—"I was going to obey."

One evening when he was eloquently conversing with his brethren on obedience, the Father Rector said—"All this, my good Brother, is very fine in words, but let us come to the test and practice; I order you now to repair to the Indies." Upon this the blessed Brother, just as he then was, in his domestic gown, taking farewell of them, hastened to the gate, rang the bell for the porter to let him out, who came, being aware of the joke, and asked him if he had his letters of recommendation for his

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journey, and upon his answering in the negative, he told him to go back to the Father Rector for them; he did so, and asked the Superior so simply and seriously for them that it was evident he was in earnest. "What, were you thus going without Viaticum and letters?" said the Rector. He replied that he had not thought of these, knowing that if God sent him, He would provide for him, adding—"I would have gone to the port, and if I had found a vessel ready to set sail for that destination, I would have embarked on it; if not, I would have tried to get out to sea, and if it appeared to me impossible to advance further, I would have retraced my steps, content with having done all that depended on me to obey." Our Saint in this case only put in practice what St. Ignatius said of himself, that on an order from the Pope, he would have gone to the port of Ostia, and that for want of a vessel ready to sail he would have thrown himself into a bark, without helm, pilot, or provisions—"because," added he, "prudence is not the virtue of him who obeys, but of him who commands." After what we have related we shall not be surprised to learn that a holy Carthusian, Father Don Vincent Maz, after having conversed for some time with Alphonsus, assured the Religious of the College that he had never met a man so admirable for his obedience, and who practised this virtue in such perfection. He firmly believed that if his Superiors ordered him to go by sea to Barcelona walking on the waters, that the faith and simplicity

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of the good Religious would induce the Lord to work a miracle to enable him to perform what was required of him.

God did not permit that the punctuality of Alphonsus should cause the slightest inconvenience to the College, and this is perceptible in a matter wherein his rigorous precision seemed calculated to cause at least some vexation to the Superior.

The students of the College were preparing for some solemn exercises, and the Father Rector, in order to prevent interruption and confusion, forbade Alphonsus, at that time porter, to admit any persons whosoever without first apprising him of the rank of the visitors. The Viceroy came with a numerous retinue, and his guards finding the door closed, knocked incessantly, and made great noise, impatient to have the door opened quickly for his Excellency. Our Saint, without being in the least disturbed by all this commotion, took time to inform the Superior, who hastened to make a thousand apologies to the Viceroy; but the nobleman, who was pious, having learned that the punctual obedience of Alphonsus had caused this delay, testified the highest admiration for the virtue of the holy porter, and asserted that he was not in the least annoyed by it.

On another occasion, when he was racked with a piercing headache, the Father Rector discoursing with him on spiritual matters, as his custom was, asked him if his head did not trouble him; and the Saint having replied that it did, the Superior desired

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him not to talk, as it would make his head worse. He continued silent till the following day, when the infirmarian complaining that he did not speak nor answer, when he was supposed to obey, Alphonsus asked the Rector when he came in the next day, if he might speak on necessary matters with the doctor and infirmarian. "Why not?" said the Father Rector. "Because," replied Alphonsus, "your Reverence desired me yesterday not to speak." Once in recreation after supper, during the reading of some pious and interesting letter, the signal for the end was given; the rest remaining, because the Father Rector did not stir, Alphonsus alone arose to retire; he was ordered to remain, and accordingly did so in his place till the following morning, when the caller, by the Superior's order, bade him go to bed.

It cost our Saint much more another time to obey the order he had received, and the following is undoubtedly the severest test to which his blind obedience was exposed. He was ill, and the physician prescribed what was absolutely contrary to his malady. Scarcely had he taken the draught when he experienced the most dangerous results, and even fears were entertained for his life. God preserved him nevertheless by a special protection. But some time after, the doctor, who did not attribute to his prescription the danger which Alphonsus had incurred, ordered it for him in a case similar to the first; and the Father Rector, who acted in accordance with the advice of the doctor, whom he believed to

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be clever, gave positive orders to the holy invalid to take the fatal drug once more. Our dear Saint who knew very well that it was the cause of the extremity to which he had been reduced, made most willingly the sacrifice of his life; however, it occurred to him that it would perhaps be a sin to expose himself to almost certain death without acquainting his Superior, and in order to be enlightened on the matter he consulted God. The Lord was pleased to make known to him that to imitate Jesus Christ perfectly, Who died through obedience, he ought to conform to the order he had received; but as the good Religious prepared to do so, he suddenly recovered his health, and from that moment he no longer needed the doctor's remedy. He thanked his good Master for having preserved him from this new peril, leaving him at the same time all the merit of his sacrifice. He seemed to himself to have gained more merit with God by this act than by any good or pious action of his life.

This his blind obedience was always animated and strengthened by his firm confidence in the divine protection and providence; the more so, as he saw that the inconveniences or evils which might otherwise thence arise were always sweetly obviated. In things which flattered nature he was accustomed to act with a little more caution, fearing to serve himself rather than obedience; hence, being once unusually distracted with severe pains, he doubted some time whether he should mention it to the prefect of health,

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as the rule prescribed. Thinking in the end that he ought to comply with the rule, he mentioned it, and afterwards understood that he pleased God by so doing, and that he gained more merit than if he had silently endured those pains for several days; as in the eyes of God the sacrifice of the will is more precious than that of the body.

What shall I say to that blind obedience, which a man of his age, experience, reputation, and intercourse with God, showed in spiritual matters, being convinced that God would not permit him to be deceived by those who were his spiritual guides? On this head let the following fact suffice. Being about to commence with the rest the Spiritual Exercises, and admonished of the method prescribed by St. Ignatius to be observed in the meditations, he informed the Father Director of the exercises of his difficulty in observing that method in prayer; that he could scarce command his emotions and prevent his affections from being carried away by the fervour of his prayer. The Father, however, remaining fixed in his opinion as to the necessity of adhering to the method (in order most probably to try the virtue of Alphonsus), he immediately submitted; and checking his soaring affections to which he was so accustomed, he attached himself to the method of prayer by the understanding, &c., from which he experienced so much pleasure and peace of mind, that he could not doubt that his Divine Master by this favour stamped, as it were, with His seal his obedient resolution. In short, Alphonsus,

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in all other things most prudent and wary, in matters of obedience was as simple and as ardent as a child. No wonder, then, that he considered it as the shortest and easiest road to sanctity, as the guardian of Religious discipline and virtue, and the absence of it a source of mischief, disorder, and scandal at home and abroad.

It was thus that our Saint attained the most sublime degree of Religious perfection; and we may assert without fear of advancing a paradox, that Heaven has had a particular design in permitting that the holy Brother should be proposed in our days to the veneration and imitation of all the Faithful throughout the Christian world. By the example of such heroic obedience, in an age when nothing is spoken of but independence, the Lord would confound those partizans of anti-social liberty, who would subvert at the same time the yoke of religion, the dominion of Kings, and even the foundation of paternal authority.

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BOOK II.

We have hitherto viewed the Blessed Alphonsus perfecting in obscurity the work of his own sanctification in the humble theatre where Providence had placed him, and trying to hide, even from the observation of his brethren, the supernatural favours of which he was the object. It was his ambition that his whole life should pass in the exercise of his ordinary duties, hidden from all creatures, and known only to God; but He Who takes delight in glorifying the humble did not permit that *this light should be always under a bushel.* He was pleased to manifest the treasures of grace with which He had enriched the soul of His servant by the miracles which illustrated his last years. The profound knowledge of Alphonsus in spiritual things was admirable; and it excited universal astonishment, how this man, almost without study, who had never had more than a superficial knowledge of Latin, and was uninitiated in the secrets of philosophy or scholastic theology, could speak so well on the most sublime matters. Even the masters themselves listened to him with respect, and confessed publicly that they had derived more benefit from his conversations than

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from the most learned researches. Every Sunday there was held a conference in the College, attended by the parish priests, doctors, graduates in civil and canon law, ecclesiastics and seculars, remarkable for piety and learning; they generally discussed some Christian virtue. Alphonsus always assisted at this pious assembly, and was occasionally interrogated on the subject of the debate. At first he excused himself as being unworthy to speak his sentiments before so many enlightened divines; but being urged in such a manner as to leave him no further grounds for refusal, he expressed himself with so much justice, energy, and in such appropriate terms, that the entire assembly were never tired of listening to him. It therefore sufficed to spread in the city the report that Alphonsus would speak at the conference to attract thereto the most distinguished persons in Majorca. All unanimously agreed that the moment the good Brother began to speak he appeared as another man; his countenance and his whole exterior were no longer to be recognized, and the holy spirit with which he was filled seemed to transform him into another apostle.

The profound knowledge of Alphonsus did not extend to moral virtues only, he seemed deeply learned with regard to the sublime mysteries of faith. A young student in theology, who walked with the seriousness of one trying to solve a difficulty which embarrassed him, one day met Alphonsus. The latter approached and interrogated him on the matter

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debated in the school, and offered to enlighten him. The point in question was the holy mystery of the Trinity, and the student acknowledged ingenuously that he had not at all understood the explanation of his professor. Then the man of God replied to all his objections with as much firmness and penetration as if he had studied these matters all his life; and not only did the young man understand perfectly the question which had been discussed on that day, but God communicated to him a supernatural illumination which rendered the entire treatise intelligible to him.

All that our Saint wrote, whether in the exposition of his conscience which his Superiors exacted from him, the little spiritual treatises which he has left, or the instructions which he has addressed to different persons, was marked with the impression of celestial wisdom. The readers of these documents could never suspect that they issued from the pen of a poor Lay-brother; one would rather suppose that they were the productions of a theologian who was equally familiar with sacred sciences and the most profound researches of mystic theology.

Alphonsus' Superiors being convinced that he had received a gift from God to discuss spiritual matters, permitted him to treat of them with seculars, and moreover gave him the charge of training the Lay-brothers who were in the Novitiate in the way of perfection. They soon perceived that they had a saint for their master: nor did our blessed Brother

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content himself with sowing by his exhortations the divine seed in their hearts, he had continual recourse to prayer in order to make it fructify, and he obtained on more than one occasion for his spiritual children the strength and courage of which they stood in need, to advance in the ways of God. One of the Novices confided to his direction had resolved to abandon the Religious life, and had already made his request to that effect to his Superiors. Alphonsus was aware of it, and immediately had recourse to the ever Blessed Virgin, conjuring her to have pity on this poor soul. He had already received on two occasions a rather favourable reply, but his charitable anxiety urged him continually to pursue his petition. At length the Queen of Heaven said these words distinctly to him—"For the third time I assure thee that this Novice will not depart for the present." Alphonsus encouraged him to remain; but some months after the instability of the young man explained too well to the holy Brother the reserve implied in the promise of the Blessed Virgin. Alphonsus was more successful with a considerable number of young persons who owed their vocation to the Religious state to his counsels and encouragement. No one in Majorca decided on taking this step without having first consulted him, so great was the confidence which his virtue inspired. He received willingly all those who came to ask his advice, and neglected nothing to distinguish the motives which determined them on embracing this holy state. He incessantly impressed

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on their minds, that the sole motive of their selecting the Religious life should be that of acquiring more perfect sanctity. The admirable prudence and discretion of Alphonsus appeared in the reserve which he maintained in recommending one Order more than another. "It is God," said he, "Who ought to be consulted in this choice; He alone can infuse into the heart of him whom He calls, that predilection or mark of the divine will, which leans in particular towards any particular institute." Nevertheless, when the reasons were exposed to him which manifested an inclination towards one Order more than another, he weighed them maturely, and according to the necessities and talents of the subject he decided. Some he counselled to enter into the Chartreuse, others to assume the habit of St. Dominic, or St. Francis. His decision was looked upon as the voice of Heaven, and in this manner did the good Brother enrich several Religious Houses with fervent Novices, who became in the sequel their ornament, and subjects of edification.

The learned Doctor, Don Bartholomew Valperga, had returned from Naples to Majorca, his native country, with the intention of going to the Court of Madrid, there to solicit an honourable and lucrative employment; he had letters of recommendation from the greatest noblemen of Naples, and amongst others from the Viceroy; and as his merit was highly eulogized therein, he considered his success as certain.

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Having an opportunity of seeing our saint, the doctor entered into conversation with him: he communicated to him his projects and his hopes. Alphonsus listened to him patiently, and, resuming the discourse, he began by dilating with energy on the vanity of the world, its goods and felicity, depicting how its promises are too often deceitful, and that there is nothing more common at Court than ambition defeated and the speculations of fortune overturned. Even merit is not sheltered from these reverses; and, besides, when we arrived at the term to which we aspired, we never find what we had expected. Moreover, there is nothing more common in the most honourable distinctions than secret aversions, continual disquietudes, and insatiable desires. As we are never satisfied with what we possess, we exhaust ourselves in vain efforts to ascend higher, and *death* comes to put an end to the agitations and turmoil of a life, the whole of which has passed away in trouble and fatigue. It is not so with celestial goods; to obtain them it suffices to aspire after them; they are never lost when once they are acquired, and it is in them alone that man finds true peace and the fulfilment of his desires. During this discourse the reverend doctor became quite serious, a wonderful change took place within him, he felt his heart divested of the love of created things, and opened insensibly to an ambition more worthy of a Christian. At length, even before Alphonsus had finished speaking, the doctor seriously determined to

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quit the world, and to enter amongst the Carthusians. This resolution was not from a feeling of passing fervour; it was a formed design, and he executed it soon with an admirable generosity of soul. He became afterwards Prior of the Convent of Jesus of Nazareth; and the business of his Order having called him to Madrid, he died there in the odour of sanctity. Before his departure from Majorca he wished to speak for the last time to Alphonsus, whom he looked upon as his father, and to whom, after God, he attributed his exalted vocation.

The Society of Jesus was indebted to Alphonsus for five excellent subjects, who, by entering it, received not only the fruit of his counsels, but also that of his prayers. The first was Father Jerome de Moranta, who after having applied from his earliest years to the practice of all Christian virtues, had consecrated himself to God in the same Order as our saint, by his advice; he afterwards went to New Spain, where he suffered and laboured much in the preaching of the Gospel. At last, as he had always desired, he watered with his blood the land of his apostleship, having been massacred by the savages on the 19th day of November, 1616. The second was Salvator Casturer, whose vocation cost Alphonsus much uneasiness; for this young man would not resolve to listen to the voice of God, which solicited him to leave the world. In the end grace triumphed in his heart, and he became the conquest of the good Brother, who had not ceased to supplicate the Lord in his behalf,

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and who called him the child of his prayers. The latter died before he had finished his course of studies, leaving after him the sweet odour of his virtues; and God was pleased to give unequivocal signs of the glory which he enjoyed in Heaven. The third was Father Raphael Oller, who, after having taught with distinction the abstruse sciences, gave himself up entirely to missionary labours, and died in the exercise of his zeal in the odour of sanctity. Father Diego Saura owed also to Alphonsus his entrance into Religion. Burning with the desire of shedding his blood for Jesus Christ, he crossed to the Philippines, where he supported with heroic constancy very great fatigues and cruel infirmities: he died piously, regretting that he was not found worthy to suffer martyrdom for his Divine Master: he had, however, to endure excessive bodily sufferings, which he bore with fortitude and joy.

But Alphonsus' child of predilection was the Blessed Peter Claver, the man of miracles, justly called the Apostle of the Negroes, since he baptized two hundred thousand of them with his own hand. It is true that when he entered into the Society of Jesus he only knew the good Brother by reputation. Providence, Who was pleased to establish the most intimate relations between these two great souls, permitted that the young Claver should be sent to Majorca, there to pursue his course of philosophy. He resolved while devoting himself to the acquisition of science, never to neglect the care of his perfection; and the

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great esteem which he had conceived for the holy Brother, even before having seen him, made him desire with ardour to form himself to the exercises of an interior life under such a master. The Superiors to whom he applied willingly permitted him to confer on spiritual matters with Alphonsus; and how great soever was the humility of the Brother, he felt in the depths of his soul an interior movement of the Holy Spirit, which prompted him to correspond without difficulty to the eagerness of the Blessed Claver; he received him then, not as a disciple, but as a friend and confidant, to whom he opened unreservedly the treasures of grace of which God's liberality had made him the depository. The young student lost none of our saint's lessons. He engraved them so deeply in his heart, and put them so generously in practice, that he made in a short time the most rapid progress in the way of perfection.

His tenderness and veneration for him, whom he looked upon as his father, were inexpressible; he could not withdraw himself from him. "O my dear Alphonsus!" said he to him often in a transport of fervour, "how shall I begin truly to love my Saviour Jesus Christ? teach me, for I have a great desire to please Him." At these words the good Brother shed tears of joy; and blessing the Lord for the happy dispositions of his pupil, he discovered to him the hidden secrets of the kingdom of grace, the fruits of his long experience and of his continual communications with God. Not content with eagerly

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receiving his precious instructions, the fervent disciple only quitted his master to transcribe faithfully all his advice in a little pamphlet, which to the day of his death he never parted with. Readers who seek edification will be glad to find inserted here a few of one saint's instructions to another; they were collected by Blessed Claver, and are to the following effect—"A Religious who would advance in virtue, must study to know himself: knowing himself, he will despise himself; by not knowing himself he becomes proud. He must speak little with men and much with God. When he speaks, let him always speak well of others and, as far as possible, ill of himself. He ought, like the great Melchisedech, to be without father, mother, or relations; because he must look upon them as not belonging to him—God alone must hold the place of all to him. Let him behold God in all men, honouring them as His images. Let him, above all, pray for those who offend him; and let him do them more good than they have done him evil. In beginning his actions, let him direct them all to the greater service and greater glory of God; whilst performing them, let him unite them to those of Jesus Christ, so as to render them more worthy of the Supreme Majesty; and at the end let him offer them to Him, for the spiritual good of his own and his neighbours' souls. Let God be always in his heart, in which he should make a sort of cell, and there let him incessantly beg for grace never to offend Him; and let him never do or say anything

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without first consulting Him. Let him never quit his room without good reason, or without asking our Lord's permission, and also grace to do nothing that may displease Him. On his return let him examine whether he comes back as he went. Let him use his senses only for necessary things and the service of God; let him not regard matters of curiosity, or hearken to useless news, which only cause distractions. Let him never speak of food, clothing, or lodging; let him eat no more than is necessary for life, and never touch delicacies. In a word, let him always act as a man dead to the world, and let him live to God alone. Let him look on praise as an outrage, remembering how little he is in the eyes of God; let him love contempt for the sake of that which Jesus Christ endured for him; and let him humble himself under affronts, thinking that they are less than his sins deserve. Let him often meditate on the end of man, and upon death, that so he may animate himself to labour and suffer, reflecting that soon he will have no more time to meditate. Let him in his meditations apply himself chiefly to the virtues peculiar to his state; and at each of these virtues let him attentively consider the greatest obstacles to be encountered in its acquirement, not leaving off till he has determined courageously to surmount them all for God. Let him often remember in detail the Passion of our Saviour and all that He has suffered for him, returning unceasing thanks for it; begging for a portion of His Cross, and carrying it joyfully

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for His love. Let him carefully avoid those occasions in which he may already have fallen, or where there may be danger of falling. Let him detach his heart from all creatures, to give it entirely to God; and let him make frequent acts of divine love every day. Let him have a tender devotion to the Holy Virgin, serving and loving her with all his heart; and let him often visit an image of her, being exact in reciting her Little Office and the beads; losing no opportunity of showing his zeal for her; but above all, let him well meditate on her virtues, and strive to imitate them. Let him honour images of the Saints as if they were themselves present, recalling to mind the virtues that distinguished them, the shortness of their labours, and the duration of their recompense. Let him watch much and sleep little; all the time given to sleep is an abbreviation of life and of merit. Let him carefully learn what is needful for him to know, but avoid all curious and superfluous study. In fine, let him seek God in all things and in all places, and he will always find Him at his side."

It will be seen that these short instructions include all that is most sublime in the Gospel, all that is most perfect in the life of a Christian and Religious; and hence we may judge of the sanctity of him who gave them, for he, in imitation of Jesus Christ, taught nothing that he had not long practised himself. This pure and holy seed cast into the heart of a disciple so fervent and so favoured by God, daily brought forth fruit a hundred-fold. Never did the Blessed

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Claver swerve from these salutary maxims; and some others which were afterwards found in a manuscript of his, which he had given to a fellow Religious, plainly show how well he had profited by the lessons of him whom God had given him as a guide to that lofty perfection to which he afterwards attained. The most devoted fathers do not love their children more tenderly than this great servant of God did his spiritual son; but as his love was more solid and pure, he incessantly recommended him to God, soliciting for him the most perfect virtues. He rejoiced in confiding the words of salvation to a heart so well disposed, and his prayers attracted the dew of Heaven on a plant which gave such great promise. The Lord was pleased to show him in a vision the eminent sanctity which his spiritual child was to attain in the sequel, and the high degree of glory which was reserved for him in Heaven. In one of those ecstasies which were habitual to him, he was raised in spirit to the abode of the Blessed, and there his Guardian Angel, who accompanied him, showed to him an immense and luminous horizon, at the extremity of which, in the midst of ineffable light, were arranged those brilliant thrones which St. John describes in the Apocalypse. On each of them he beheld a majestic person surrounded with royal magnificence. Only one of these thrones was vacant, though it was distinguished from the rest by its richness and splendour. Alphonsus amazed, begged an explanation of all that he had seen. The

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Angel answered that this glory which so dazzled him was destined for his dear disciple, Father Claver, who would one day fill the vacant throne. "Such will be," added the Angel, "the recompense of his eminent virtues and prodigious number of souls which he will convert in the West Indies by his labours and sufferings." The vision then suddenly disappeared. On returning to himself it would be impossible to describe his joy, but he carefully concealed it from the young student, merely informing his confessor of it, through whom it afterwards became known.

If our dear saint had followed the first impulse of his heart, he would have imitated St. Anthony of Padua, who learning by revelation that a certain man would obtain the crown of martyrdom, sought him everywhere to give him public marks of veneration; but if secrecy prevented the gratification of his piety herein, at least nothing could equal the respect he ever after felt for the Blessed Claver in his heart. One day perceiving him at a distance with another young Jesuit, he said to one of the Fathers standing near—"Do you see those two young Religious? they will go to the Indies and procure the salvation of many souls." The event verified the prediction, and at the same time serves to verify the revelation already related with regard to the Blessed Claver, who then had no idea of the employment designed for him by God, but was awaiting in peace the orders of his Superiors.

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It seems that the favours with which God blesses His servants are sometimes communicated from one to another. As the Blessed Claver was once going out with a companion of great virtue, Alphonsus, who was porter, stopped them for a moment, and, making the Sign of the Cross over them, said—"Remember the Three Adorable Persons of the Blessed Trinity accompany you," and then immediately fell into an ecstasy; at the same moment the holy youth felt penetrated with such love and tenderness as to be scarcely able to move; he thought of going back into the house, but reflecting that Superiors had sent him, he begged God to moderate the excess of those sensible favours, and give him the power to obey. He obtained his request, but there remained so vivid an impression of what he had experienced, that almost every step cost him an effort, and for the rest of the day he seemed to be transported out of himself. As the time fixed for the Blessed Claver's departure from Majorca was approaching, he was obliged to make up his mind to quit his saintly master; and this separation was perhaps one of his greatest sacrifices. Before they parted, God was pleased again to let our saint serve him as a sure guide to direct him in the path wherein he was to acquire such great merit, and to render such important services to his neighbour. If St. Gregory the Great is justly called the Apostle of England, for having sent the apostolic labourers to plant the Faith there, it may also be said that Blessed Alphonsus has desired the title of "Apostle

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of Carthagena," or "of the Negroes," for he had formed Blessed Claver to perfection, obtained by his prayers his Religious vocation, and his instructions had prepared him for the sublime functions of the apostleship.

Being informed of the designs of Heaven in regard to him, he went to him shortly before his departure, and unveiling to him his whole soul, depicted with energy the abandonment in which so many souls lived deprived of the light of the Gospel. He commiserated the fate of those vast regions, where the harvest, already ripe, only waited for evangelical workmen to gather its abundance; and then shedding a torrent of tears, the fervent Religious cried out with a feeling of holy indignation—"I cannot express to you the sorrow I feel at seeing that God is unknown to the greater part of the world, owing to the scarcity of Priests who go to preach His name; what tears are not called forth at the sight of so many people straying in the wilderness, because there is no one to guide them; so many who perish, not because they seek their own loss, but because no effort is made to save them. We see many useless workmen where there is no harvest, and where the harvest is abundant there are so few workmen! How many have scarcely any success in Europe who in America would be Apostles! The trouble of seeking them is dreaded, whilst the peril and crime of abandoning them is uncared for. The riches of those countries are prized, whilst the people are despised. Cannot

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charity traverse seas already opened by cupidity? What! Is charity more timid than avarice! Whole fleets laden with their treasures enter the port of Spain, but what a multitude of souls might be conducted to the port of eternal felicity! Why should love of the world be so much more ardent in the acquisition of the former, than is the love of Jesus Christ for the conquest of the latter? Savage as these men may appear, they are diamonds, unpolished it is true, but whose beauty will well repay the lapidary's skill. Is it, then, that souls are no longer the price of the blood of a God? Has not Jesus Christ died for these poor infidels? O holy Brother of my soul, what a field is here opened to your zeal! Will *you* not at least go to gather in these abandoned countries the fruits of our Saviour's Passion? He who knows not how to suffer, knows not how to love! If the glory of God's house concerns you, go to the Indies and save millions of these poor perishing souls. If you love Jesus Christ, go and labour with Him until death for man's salvation, since you belong to His Society. America awaits you! Oh! if you knew the treasure of merit which is prepared for you, and which you will find there! To be willing to go under obedience to the Indies is certainly much, but not enough for a Jesuit; that being his first and most noble vocation, he should signify his eagerness for it to Superiors, and earnestly solicit such a function. Represent your own desires immediately to them; beg, urge, entreat of them to send you: reiterated

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entreaties are not contrary to obedience when there is reason to believe that the Superior demurs only to try our constancy." So much was not necessary to inflame a heart so generous as that of Blessed Claver. Already in the disposition to undertake all for the honour of the Divine Majesty, he felt himself animated anew by an ardent desire to fly to the succour of the infidels of the New World; and, encouraged by the counsels of Alphonsus, who incessantly repeated to him that such was the will of God with regard to him, he wrote to his Superiors, demanding with the most lively entreaties to be sent on an American mission. The Blessed Claver having at length finished the course of his studies, received orders to repair to Barcelona. We may imagine what he endured in parting with the blessed Brother. The sacrifice was equal on both sides. Alphonsus pressed his young friend tenderly in his arms, and gave him as a pledge of his paternal affection, a little book written with his own hand, containing an abridgment of all the maxims of perfection he so often inculcated. This book was a treasure to Claver; he carried it always about him; and soon having obtained leave to go to the West Indies, he considered the precious gift as his consolation, his light, and his safeguard. He recurred to it in all his doubts; in the height of his labours he found in reading this book a sort of refreshment; he even made this book the instrument of a great number of miracles. In the last years of his life, when his infirmities

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detained him in his chamber, and he felt his end approaching, having learned that the Life of the happy Brother had just been published, and that his likeness had been engraved, he was filled with joy, and said aloud—"Blessed be the Lord Who permits that I should see the most ardent of my desires accomplished; after this happy news I shall die content." He requested the Life of Alphonsus to be read for him several times, and he wished for a repetition of it when approaching his last moments. One of the attendants of the invalid having taken away the book unobserved by him, judging that this reading would fatigue him too much in his exhausted state, he implored it should be returned, assuring those about him that it constituted his strength and consolation.

He gave the same demonstrations of satisfaction when he was presented with the likeness of his "good master," which was the name he bestowed on our saint. He placed it on his head to express his veneration, then kissed it tenderly and pressed it to his heart, and pronounced it to be a striking likeness. He wished that it should be hung up against the wall, opposite his bed, in order to procure him the pleasure of having it always before his eyes; and on this occasion he recounted to Brother Nicholas Gonzalez, his most intimate confidant, all that passed between him and the Blessed Rodriguez during his sojourn at Majorca, and particularly the circumstance of the saint's prophecy. "He predicted to me," said he, "that I should be sent to America; that I should

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proceed to Carthagena, and that I should there labour for the salvation of the infidels." Inquiry was then made about some other particulars, beginning with that extraordinary ecstasy before related, which, whilst the Father was relating, he himself seemed to pass into a similar ecstasy: his eyes suddenly closed, his speech failed, and it was by signs only that he could express the interior delights then inundating his heart. A few moments afterwards the Brother, thinking him in a slumber, withdrew, carrying the book with him; but no sooner was he gone than the Blessed Claver returned to himself, and missing his treasure desired to be quickly dressed, and supported by affection, which at that moment lent him strength, he repaired to the sacristy whither the Brother was gone, begging he would not refuse him the consolation of again enjoying the sight of his dear master's life and portrait. Respect would not allow him to send another person for it; and notwithstanding his excessive weakness he would go himself, in order that he might be able to say that if he owed the happiness of first seeing it to the kindness of others, the second sight of it at least should be the reward of his own affection. Such was the opinion entertained of the holy Brother by one of the most distinguished missionaries of his age—a new Xavier—whose memory is revered throughout the New World, and who having been declared Blessed by a Brief of His Holiness Pope Pius IX., dated 16th of July, 1850, has now become happily

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united with his spiritual father in the veneration of the Faithful.

The holy Brother did not form Religious persons alone to perfection; his zeal was also very useful to persons in the world. In the process of his Beatification there is mention made of a great number of sinners who owed their change of heart to his fervent exhortations. He induced a distinguished officer named Peter de St. Cecile, to embrace the ecclesiastical state. This nobleman had lost his wife in the bloom of life; he contemplated a new settlement when he had occasion to speak to Alphonsus. The latter, to whom he imparted his design, seeing him richly clad and attended by a splendid equipage, easily perceived that he was one for whom the world had lost nothing of its charms, and said to him these words—"Believe me, God has not deprived you of your first wife in order that you should marry again; He has other designs on you, which will tend much more to your advantage." These few words made such an impression on the officer that he could never efface them from his mind. He finally determined to renounce the military profession, and enter the celestial army; he was afterwards promoted to the priesthood, and gave example of the most sublime virtues.

Our saint, aware that the rule which recommends that a Lay-brother, and especially a porter, ought to embrace every opportunity of suggesting pious thoughts and desires to his neighbour, considered it a duty

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which cost him little, to speak of the things of God to all those whom he visited. He recommended particularly on those occasions the recital of the Rosary, and he eloquently expatiated on the inestimable advantages which Christians derive from the regular frequentation of the Sacraments of Penance and the Blessed Eucharist. Devotion to the ever Blessed Virgin Mother of God was also the ordinary subject of his conversations with persons of the world, and he clearly extracted expedients from so happy a subject, to engage sinners to recur with confidence to her who is their refuge, at the same time that he made them sensible that it is not enough to honour her by external practices, if her maternal heart be lacerated by outrages against her Divine Son. The scholars of the College were in a particular manner the object of his zeal. He taught them the Christian doctrine, inspired them with a tender love to the Queen of Virgins, and suggested little pious practices proportionate to their age and want. He devoted himself with equal zeal to the poor who came to ask alms at the door of the College; and in the catechism which he taught them, he mingled the most apposite reflections with the most pathetic exhortations.

Another method which our dear saint employed to contribute, as far as lay in his power, to the salvation of his neighbour, was the fervour with which he had recourse to God, to interest Him in the success of preachers and other evangelical workmen.

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Being convinced that the little fruit which resulted to souls from their labours too often proceeded from their preaching the Gospel by word only, and not endeavouring to illustrate it sufficiently by their example, he begged earnestly of God that He would bestow on His ministers the virtues constituting Apostles, and to render them powerful in work and word. Alphonsus did not neglect when opportunity offered, to instil into such of the Religious of the house as were employed in the sacred functions of the ministry, that the most efficacious means of sanctifying others was to labour first in the work of their own perfection.

What happened on one of those occasions is too worthy of remark to be omitted here. Two Fathers had been deputed to preach the Lent, and our saint had recommended them in a particular manner to our Divine Redeemer and His ever Blessed Mother. Our Blessed Lady made known to him that conformably to his desire she had placed these two Religious under her protection, which she gave him to understand by showing him that she held her hands extended over the heads of the two Fathers. Our Blessed Lord declared to him on His part, that their exhortations would be productive of great good to souls. But this was not enough for Alphonsus. He remarked that one of the Fathers, possessed of the most brilliant talents, was not instrumental in producing the good which ought reasonably to have been expected from his discourses; he returned then

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to prayer with still more earnestness than before, and it was revealed to him that if this Religious would obtain success similar to that of the Saints of the primitive Church, he should strengthen himself like them in humility, and in the exercise of solid virtue. The blessed Brother, after having received this answer, consulted his Superior several times, and according to his advice he imparted the warning to the preacher. The Father willingly received the advice, and profited so well thereby, that he made great progress in perfection. It was soon perceptible in his audience; though previously his sermons were useful to many, it was nothing in comparison to the remarkable conversions which he afterwards achieved; and his subsequent discourses, replenished with divine unction, triumphed over the most hardened sinners. From this time forward there existed a very great intimacy between him and our saint, who continued to interest himself in his concerns, gave him ever after a special share in his prayers to God, which were most beneficial to him, not only in the spiritual but also in the corporal way; for the Father finding himself much inconvenienced at the commencement of Lent by an asthma, which hindered him from being able to ascend the pulpit, Alphonsus entreated the Blessed Virgin on his behalf so earnestly, that she appeared to him and said—"Have I not already assured thee that I have taken the Father under my protection? Why dost thou disquiet thyself? His indisposition will not hinder him from preaching."

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In fact, though the malady existed in all its violence, it ceased at certain intervals, and the preacher was able to continue his sermons. At another time the same Father was attacked with such violent head-aches as to render him incapable of applying to the functions of his ministry. On this occasion the holy Brother had recourse to his ordinary means, and earnestly implored Heaven for the restoration of one whose health was so essential to the good of souls. After having prayed with this intention for several days, he felt himself replenished with extraordinary consolation, which lasted until he was apprized that the Father was much better. On his recovery he devoted himself so zealously with all his strength and energies of mind and body to the apostolic labours for several years, that, finally exhausted by excess of fatigue, he died in the odour of sanctity.

Alphonsus, not content with contributing as far as lay in his power to the glory of God and the salvation of souls, by inculcating piety and devotion to the ever Blessed Virgin, to all with whom he could communicate, he offered continually to Heaven the ardour of his desires for the conversion of all sinners throughout the world, looking upon all as his brethren, bearing, with him, the image of his Blessed Creator and Lord, and bought with the most precious Blood of the Redeemer. He would have wished to save all men, and would have esteemed himself happy in suffering the most acute pain without any other recompense than that of seeing his Divine Master

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loved and praised eternally by all creatures. As it did not suffice for His charity to accept of every evil here below united in His own Person, to obtain the salvation of His brethren, or even the soul of one poor slave; he was willing to undergo for so noble an end, torments the most excessive as long as it should please God, and even those of hell, if it could be without losing His grace, provided that the redemption of Christ produced all the effects which our Divine Saviour contemplated in His incarnation and death on the Cross. These generous dispositions were so sincere in Alphonsus, and so agreeable to the Divine Majesty, that, as he one day wished in the fervour of his prayer to be present with all men at once, in order to exhort all to the sweet service of God and to the pursuit of their eternal interests, it pleased our Blessed Redeemer so to elevate him in spirit that he saw and knew all the men and women in the world; and it was revealed to him that this ardent desire of his heart would receive the same recompense as if it had been realized in all its extent by the conversion of that vast multitude. This his great zeal for souls was always conformable to his humble degree in the Society. His spiritual conversation, modesty, and good example made him a powerful and constant preacher; and the situation of porter which he so long occupied gave him great opportunities.

The ardent charity which animated him made him surmount the repugnance which he experienced in

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corresponding with the most distinguished persons in Majorca, who consulted him on their spiritual interests, and who derived great benefit from his advice. And such was the veneration which the holy Brother's virtues inspired, and the idea entertained by all of the supernatural wisdom with which he was endowed, that his reputation was not confined to Majorca alone; it quickly spread throughout all Spain. Don Francis Ribera, the illustrious Archbishop of Valencia and Patriarch of Antioch, whose virtues have been attested by the Holy See, wrote often to Alphonsus to consult him, and several times entreated his Superiors to allow him to go to Valencia, in order that he might be able to converse the more easily and state his difficulties more clearly to him. To comply with the wishes of so distinguished a Prelate, it was often in contemplation to send our saint to him; but God permitted always something to occur as an obstacle to his departure, and that Majorca should be honoured with his residence until death. Isidore de St. Vincent, the successor of Don Francis, communicated to him all the secrets of his heart, and preserved his letters as relics. Cardinal Gaspard de Borgia, who united the honour of the Roman purple with that of his personal merit, kept up an uninterrupted correspondence with him. But those who had opportunities of more intimate communication with him—those especially who lived in the same house with him—had frequent occasions of admiring the great things our Lord had done of

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His infinite goodness in him. The holy Carthusian, Father Vincent Mas, having had a long conference with the good Brother, declared that all he had heard of him was nothing in comparison to what he had learned in this conversation. Another Father, eminent for virtues and learning, desirous to judge for himself of the sanctity of the holy Brother, went to visit him, and had the following conversation with him—"What is your country?" "Heaven," replied Alphonsus. "How old are you?" "I might be able to count my years if I had employed them in serving God, but as I have not done so, I am ignorant of their number." "If you were given your choice to remain longer on earth, or to go immediately to Heaven, which would you prefer?" "The will of God would be mine." "But if God left the matter at your disposal?" "I would only wish for the accomplishment of the good pleasure of my Sovereign Master; I prefer it to all that I could possess in Heaven were I there contrary to His holy will." The learned Father left our saint filled with respect and veneration for his virtues.

Interior virtues and the gifts of grace with which the soul is adorned form, in the estimation of spiritual persons, the measure of its sanctity; but in the ordinary course of things we can judge only by the exterior, and nothing strikes us more forcibly than the charity which relieves the temporal wants of our neighbour, particularly when the services rendered him are enhanced by miraculous circumstances. God

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did not permit that this species of glory should be wanting to the Blessed Alphonsus; and we do not know which most to admire, the tender compassion which he evinced for the necessities of his brethren, or the empire which he exercised over the Heart of our Divine Lord Himself, to obtain supernatural assistance in their favour. He took the greatest delight in visiting the sick in their private houses and in the hospital of the city; in collecting alms to assist the retiring poor; and, in fine, in rendering to every one in distress all the good offices in his power. He had received from his Superior permission to beg alms for this end, and it was with a lively sentiment of joy, ever depicted on his countenance, that he received from the rich wherewith to pursue his benevolent purposes of charity. The exalted opinion entertained of his virtues the more readily induced the wealthy to supply him from their abundance, and many were convinced that their donations had multiplied in his hands. It was under this pious impression that he was appointed to distribute the alms which were usually given at the door of the College; and such were the delight and earnestness with which he acquitted himself of this employment, that it drew tears from the eyes of those who witnessed him. But never did his charity appear more heroic than when a Spanish squadron, in which an epidemic had broken out, arrived at Majorca. The hospital for the sailors and soldiers attacked with the malady was almost entirely abandoned, as every one dreaded the con-

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tagion. Our dear saint considering the event a glorious opportunity of self-sacrifice, begged to be allowed to visit the sick and afflicted, and to procure from the charitable all kinds of comforts and assistance for their relief. Day and night he was indefatigable in his efforts for them, and the renown of his charity spread far and wide throughout the kingdom.

Mention is made of several miraculous cures effected by our saint during his lifetime; of the gift of prophecy which was communicated to him; and of revelations in which he beheld the glory which several persons enjoyed in Heaven, in whose happiness he felt deeply interested. These extraordinary graces do not make saints, but it must be admitted they throw a kind of splendour around sanctity; and our Divine Redeemer, Who wished to glorify His beloved servant before men, in proportion to his humility, was pleased to bestow His favours on him with a munificence rarely evinced towards the most privileged souls.

Of the many miraculous cures recorded we will only relate the following—

The first case shall be that of a young student, healed by him with the Sign of the Cross, of a grievous and offensive scrofula, or king's evil. Sadly tormented, and having failed of all relief from the doctors, he finally determined to go to France to be touched by the King, it being reported that those monarchs had received from God the grace of curing this disease by the royal touch. For this end he had

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twice embarked, but had been each time driven back by contrary winds, and obliged to return home. Being much afflicted both from the disease and at seeing the gate of relief shut against him, he came to the College, and having shown to the Blessed Alphonsus his disgusting evil, the youth bemoaned his inability to find relief on earth or in Heaven. Our saint on seeing and hearing him was moved with the deepest compassion, and raising his eyes to Heaven made the Sign of the holy Cross upon the diseased part: nor was more required. At that holy sign the disease totally vanished, the tears ceased to flow, all his woe ended, and the youth found himself as well as though he never had suffered from it at all.

Two men with merely drinking water upon which Alphonsus had made the Sign of the Cross were cured of burning and long-standing fevers, as they themselves, happening to survive the servant of God, testified in the process of Beatification. The first of these was a poor carpenter named Christopher Colmer, a friend of Alphonsus. He had been seized and was consumed by an ardent fever. He went to find Alphonsus at the College, hoping that he would be able to cure him. To avoid any suspicion in our saint that he wished miracles from him, he asked for a draught of water. The servant of God brought it to him; but the man before drinking said—"That I may receive no hurt make the Sign of the Cross upon it." "Excellent!" replied Alphonsus, not suspecting the intention: "Excellent! but first

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let us recite five *Paters* and *Aves*," which being said, he blessed the water, which the sick man drank. Scarcely had he done so, and seated himself by a little wall of the porteria, than he fell asleep. Arousing himself he returned to drink, and the fever immediately left him; and returning home with a good appetite, in not more than three days he found himself perfectly well.

The other cure was that of a confectioner, who, afflicted for a long time with a tertian ague, obtained, though with great entreaties, that Alphonsus would bless some water he wished to drink, after drinking which the fever quickly left him, and he felt no more of it.

The Cavalier John Vivot was restored to health of body, already despaired of, and of soul also, of which there much need, by one visit from Alphonsus. This knight had received by some means a gun-shot wound, for which he had no sooner been visited by the doctors and surgeons than his life was despaired of, and he had already received Extreme Unction. Desirous of being cured, and entertaining the highest opinion of the sanctity of Alphonsus, he would have wished one visit from him, hoping by this means to be healed. To gain his point he sent to the College for a confessor, making known also his wish that Alphonsus should attend him as companion. His wish was complied with. Whilst the knight was engaged with the Father, Alphonsus was praying for him, and during his prayers he had a presentiment that the

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gentleman would be healed. On their leaving, the knight wished Alphonsus to make the Sign of the Cross over him, but he would not consent. "At least give your hand," said the sick man; but he would not do even this, and retired merely saying that he might have good hope of his cure. The Father then wished Alphonsus to console him by giving him his hand, which the cavalier placed upon the wound, and particularly upon one arm that was hurt, and which had hitherto remained wholly immoveable. At that touch the knight found himself in an instant better, and began to move his arm, and after a few days he was entirely well, as though nothing had happened, to the amazement of the doctors. Seeing then, and firmly believing the wound, and the cure so wonderfully effected by means of the Blessed Alphonsus, to be no other than the voice of God calling him to a better state of life, the gentleman entirely reformed his habits, and embraced the life of a truly Christian cavalier.

Doctor Bartholomew Callado was returning from Catalonia to Majorca with others of his suite, in a little vessel and ill manned, when, behold, a Turkish frigate well armed bore down upon them, and was already so near that they heard the voices of those on board. All gave themselves up for lost, never dreaming of escaping by flight or resistance, the chances being so unequal. In this strait the doctor had recourse to God, imploring Him by the merits of His servant Alphonsus Rodriguez to save them.

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In thus praying he felt to arise sensibly in his heart a lively hope of the divine help, which was as a pledge of the favour to be done him. Hardly had he finished praying when a thick cloud interposed itself between the two vessels, whereby the doctor and his companions were enabled to escape, and arrived safely in Majorca, acknowledging both life and liberty to have been given them by God by the merits of our blessed Brother.

A lady one day came to the College and begged to see Alphonsus. She presented him her only child, who was dying in her arms. The saint touched with the deep affliction of the mother, made the Sign of the Cross on the child, and desired her to go in peace for the child would live. The boy instantaneously recovered health and strength, to the joy and gratitude of the happy parents.

God was pleased to attach a miraculous virtue to objects which belonged to, or had touched, our saint. A clergyman, attacked by a violent fever, had in vain tried all the art of medicine; he believed that if he could get some garment which Alphonsus had worn, he would recover. A cap of the holy Brother's was therefore brought to the sick man, which he put on his head with a lively faith; and having slept for some hours, on awaking he exclaimed—"I am cured; I am cured through the intercession of Brother Alphonsus." He then rose and was able to dress himself. In the morning he went to the College to celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving for his recovery.

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On another occasion a widow was cured by girdin herself with the holy man's belt. The report of these miracles attracted great numbers, who all evinced the utmost anxiety to borrow the precious relics which operated such wonderful cures.

Another cure was also effected on a boy, who in fever was reduced to death's door, by placing on his head the hat which our saint sometimes wore. The following is a still more extraordinary fact. A Father of the College from time to time went to hear the confession of a poor infirm man in the suburbs of the city. Alphonsus often accompanied him; and whilst the Father performed the functions of his ministry to the sick man, the holy Brother usually seated himself in another apartment, and always on the same chair. This chair was looked upon with veneration in the house, and it was undoubtedly believed that by means of it they would obtain extraordinary favours from God. The daughter-in-law of the master of the house, filled with this hope, wished to make a trial. She had always very painful and dangerous confinements, and she believed that if she could only seat herself upon it for a moment before her pains commenced, the Lord would grant her through the merits of our saint a safe delivery. It was done to her according to her faith, for her subsequent confinements were without any serious pain. Thenceforward the chair became renowned, and had obtained a number of similar miracles. A lady amongst others, who had had seven children

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die at their birth without the benefit of baptism, at the approach of her confinement of her eighth child, had recourse with lively confidence to the chair of the venerated Brother, and was delivered of a healthy child, to the great delight of the entire family, who apprehended so deeply the result. After these events the chair was preserved as a precious relic.

Another circumstance was yet more remarkable. A Brother Coadjutor of the Society declared with truly Religious humility, at the process of our saint's Beatification, that he had been tormented during several years against the holy virtue of purity, without being able to obtain from Heaven a cessation of so severe a trial. He was infirmarian, and being one day at the bedside of Alphonsus, then ill, he perceived a string which the saint sometimes used; he took it to put round him with a lively confidence, and implored the Lord through the merits of His holy servant the deliverance from this horrible temptation, which he immediately experienced.

We will end the narration of these miraculous favours bestowed upon Alphonsus whilst yet alive, with recounting the following prodigy, wrought in his favour in testimony of the divine approval of an act of charity and self-denial. He was one day engaged in some work, when an invalid Religious asked him to draw up from the bottom of a well a jar full of some medicinal liquor, placed there tied to a cord, to keep cool. At first Alphonsus felt within himself some repugnance in gratifying him by complying with his

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request, as well because the Religious was not so weak but that he could do it himself, as also because the work he had in hand appeared to him of more importance to be expedited. He had scarcely however discovered that internal motion to have been ill regulated from passion, than leaving his own work he went to draw up the vase. It had been badly fixed to the cord, and as soon as he touched it, it became detached; whence by natural consequence the jug would have remained at the bottom of the well, which was very deep. But God, Who willed to show Alphonsus how pleasing to Him was the victory he had gained over himself, to gratify the wish of the other, caused that the vase should of itself ascend till the saint was enabled to take it with his hands, and thus gave it to the Religious. This fact, so wholly miraculous, would never have been known, if Alphonsus, compelled by obedience to name all that happened to him, had not been obliged to manifest this also.

The spirit of prophecy, one of the gifts of God, which are called *gratis data*, although not a necessary requirement to make a Saint, yet it is frequently an ornament of sanctity often communicated by God to His faithful ones, to render them more venerable in the eyes of men amongst whom they live. This spirit, conformably to the doctrine of St. Gregory in his first homily on Ezechiel, possesses three degrees; the first, the knowledge of things secret, though hidden in the recesses of the heart; the second, the

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seeing things afar off as though present; and thirdly, the sight of things future, announcing them to come, not conjecturally, but with certainty. Now this spirit was communicated by God to our saint in all these three points. For the glory of God and the honour of His servant we will give the following cases, though not all that could be mentioned, from whence the reader will be able to form a greater idea how dear to God was this good Religious.

We will first mention the case of Don Francis Paceco, one of the royal auditors of Majorca. This gentleman, without any offence at all, beheld himself in a moment deprived of his office, to his great disgrace, and the not less injury to his family. He felt the blow most sensibly, and being deeply afflicted, did not know to which side to turn for a remedy. In this state he betook himself to the College, to sigh out his misfortune with the Blessed Alphonsus, of whom he had a high opinion, and at the same time to consult him as to his best course. With many tears and sighs he told his distressing case to the servant of God, who was greatly affected, and deeply sympathized with him. Then raising his soul to Heaven—"Lord," he said, with a resolute voice, "let him not delay; let him go quickly to Madrid. His rivals have obtained that sentence should be there passed against him, without even opening the process fabricated against him. Let him go then, let him make his petition; they shall see the process, and acknowledge his innocence, and

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he shall return here reinstated in his office." The determined manner in which Alphonsus spoke, left no doubt to Paceco but that he so spoke with light from above; wherefore without delay, accompanied by a servant, he embarked for Spain, and quickly landing, went to the Court. Arrived there, he spoke in his defence and justification; and he found indeed that the sentence had been given against him without the indictment having been, not to say read, but not even opened. It was opened therefore, and all the accusations found unsustainable. On which account he obtained from the monarch not only a declaration of his innocency, but a restitution to his office. Nor only so; but returning home triumphant, he was soon afterwards declared, in the name of the King, Visitor of Majorca, from whence he was sent as Regent into Sardinia, a post of higher distinction and greater profit. On his return he did nothing but praise the blessed Brother, who had so minutely told him the cause of his misfortune and the course to be taken by him, which he could only have known by a special light from Heaven. He attributed also to the prayers of the servant of God the despatch that his affair had made at Court, seeming, as he expressed it, rather to fly than walk, not having met with even the least obstacle in its course, but finding a friendly recognition and unusual expedition from all concerned in it.

The second case of his manifesting a knowledge of secret things was the following. One day a young

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man came to the College to see the Father Rector. Whilst he was waiting, Alphonsus, without the youth telling him the cause of his visit, suddenly said—"Lord, what a much better state of life has not this one chosen than his brothers! and how much better does he secure his salvation, who prefers to serve God in Religion, than he who, to satisfy his own appetites, remains in the world. Let him therefore be of good hope that he will obtain all that he desires, by the favour of God." The youth was astonished at hearing him so speak; for, though he was indeed come to the College to consult with the Father Rector upon his vocation to the Society, yet he had not hinted it to any one whatever. Seeing that his secret was discovered, and the inutility of dissembling, he confessed his design to the holy Brother and begged the aid of his prayers. The youth having entered the Society, testified to another prophecy made by our saint concerning himself. When a child of eight years old, "I passed," said he, "a day in the porteria of the College, together with my elder brother and tutor, when Alphonsus taking me aside, said—'You, O child, in your time, shall enter the Society, and be obliged to succeed to the apostolical labours of your good uncle, the Father Crispin.'"

Another day, when exercising his duties as porter, a cleric whom he had never before seen came from the Carthusian monastery, about three leagues off, having a packet of letters for Alphonsus himself,

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consigned to him by Father Don Vincent Mas, of whom we have before made mention. Now before the cleric had time to ask for the person he wished to see, or to say for what purpose he came, Alphonsus preventing, asked him—"What would Father Vincent do and wish?" The cleric, completely astonished at the question, answered—"How do you know that I came from the convent and who sent me?" Then the servant of God, covered with blushes, endeavoured to turn the subject, though in vain he endeavoured to conceal the fact of the revelation, since it was too clear to the cleric that unless by some superior light he could not have known whence he came, or by whom he was sent.

With regard to the things known by Alphonsus though far distant, we will record the following cases. Two of the Fathers had been sent upon a mission to a certain part of the Kingdom of Majorca called Sineu, to endeavour to compose certain very serious differences that had arisen amongst the people. The Fathers had laboured much with little or no fruit, and therefore wrote to the Father Rector who had sent them, to help them with prayers and sacrifices. He accordingly recommended this urgent case to all the College, giving a particular charge to Alphonsus, who quickly betook himself to prayer, begging of God through the intercession of His Blessed Virgin Mother to give a favourable issue to that worthy undertaking. At the end of the day he was assured by the Blessed Virgin herself, that it had been granted

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in his favour; that the parties had met together, and that in that very hour a messenger had been despatched to bring the news to Palma. The Father Rector, to whom the saint related the whole, marked the hour, which, on the arrival of the messenger with the desired news, they found to be the very same indicated by Alphonsus.

Father John Aguirre after being some years in Majorca was ordered by his Superiors to cross over to Catalonia. Accordingly he went to the port to embark. With this Father our saint had had a particular spiritual intimacy and communion whilst living together; hence in an especial manner he recommended him to the most holy Virgin for a prosperous passage. The Blessed Virgin, on the contrary however, gave him to understand that if the Father embarked in the vessel ready in port, he would infallibly be carried a slave to Algiers. Alphonsus at hearing her thus speak was deeply afflicted. Turning himself therefore with his eyes full of tears, and his whole heart on his lips—"No," he began to say; "O dear Mother, may it never be so; if you will you can hinder it, and I will not cease to pray you until the Father returns, and I see him in my room." Alphonsus persevered in his entreaties to the Queen of Heaven, nor were his prayers in vain. By what occurrence I know not, the Father Rector sent to recall Father Aguirre, who accordingly returned, and a few days after it was known that the same vessel soon after leaving the

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port was captured by the Corsairs, and with the whole crew and cargo taken to Algiers.

If the light of prophecy in our saint secured the liberty of Father Aguirre, the same light calmed not a little the trouble of the whole College in the following event. Father Peter Juste, Provincial of Arragon, to which the College of Majorca belonged, had been making his visitation there, and had re-embarked to return to Spain. At that time a Turkish vessel was descried in the Sea of Majorca, with another in tow, and it was much doubted that this was the very vessel upon which the Father Provincial and his companions had embarked, who might now have become slaves. In a little time it was spoken of throughout Palma as a matter of fact. This report filled the College with distress, and all were deeply afflicted. Alphonsus alone appeared joyful and serene as though nothing had happened. The Father Rector was so much astonished that he could not abstain saying to him—"How is this, Brother Alphonsus! all the rest of the house are afflicted on account of the misfortune of the Father Provincial and his companions, and you are as tranquil as though nothing had happened?" "So it is," replied Alphonsus. "There is no harm; and already at this hour the Father Provincial and his companions are safe and sound in Barcelona, having had a most favourable voyage." Not many days after it was known that the Fathers had arrived safely, and were in Barcelona at the very hour mentioned by the saint.

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We will relate now one of his prophecies, the true meaning of which he did not understand at the time that God was pleased to make the declaration of it through him. A project was under discussion at Majorca of embarking some Scholastics of the Society, with their professor of philosophy, and sending them to Valencia. There was then ready a vessel from Ragusa called the *Velina*. Father Torrens, then Rector of the College, consulted with the other Fathers as to the prudence of embarking them in that vessel. The consultors for some reasons were of opinion that it would not be well to do so; but the Rector, who inclined to the other side, ordered Alphonsus to pray to God upon the point. He did so with all ardour, and our Lord was pleased to reveal to him, that if they embarked in that ship the voyage would be "a golden voyage." Alphonsus interpreted that sentence, "a voyage of gold," in the obvious and ordinary sense, viz., a prosperous and happy one. He told the Father Rector, who also took the words in the same sense, and, contrary to the opinion of the other Fathers, wished the Religious to embark in that ship. And truly in the beginning they sailed prosperously, so much so, that they were just upon the point of landing in Spain, when the *Velina* was boarded by a Turkish ship (the captain of which was Simon Danza, a Lutheran renegade, and corsair), was plundered, and taken, with all the crew, slaves to Algiers. Upon receiving the news, great was the

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mortification of the Rector, and much more that of Alphonsus, upon whose word the Rector had acted; and if the latter had to bear the blame of imprudence for acting contrary to the advice of his consultors, the former had to bear the imputation of a false prophet and a deluder. Our saint, much distressed, not on account of what was said against himself, but for the loss of those Fathers, and of the Province, mourned before God upon the misfortune; but he was told not to afflict himself, for that in his time it should be seen how true the prognostication was that the voyage should be "a golden voyage," and by no means a delusion of his own; because in addition to the great merits gained by all those Religious from a whole year's slavery, and suffering a thousand insults and cruelties from those into whose hands they fell, most numerous were the conversions to a good life they made amongst the Christian slaves, and a full account of all was printed for the edification of the people. The greatest fruit, however, of all, was the fervour it rekindled in one of these same Religious, who had been tepid and negligent, but became a perfect Religious and the apostle of all Spain. This was one James Lopez, a youth who during all the course of his study of philosophy in Majorca had given so little satisfaction that he had been remanded to Spain for no other purpose than to put off the habit and become a secular, not being at all adapted for the Religious life. He was sold, then, in Algiers for four hundred

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ducats to a Spanish renegade, who made him a thousand offers both of his liberty and many other advantages if he would renounce the faith and become a Mahommedan. He was moreover tempted to fall by a thousand misfortunes; and to flatteries were always added constant threats and bad treatment, with no other result, however, than to crown him with all these merits gained by his invincible constancy and heroic patience. Finally, being discovered to be a native of Valencia, where not long before a Turkish malefactor had been hung, the Algerines determined to burn Lopez alive, in reparation, as they said, of the outrage, and for this end offered large sums of money to his master to get him into their hands. Nor was the contract far from completion; but God, Who willed to preserve him for great designs, inspired the French Consul to interfere, and by his authority to hinder the treaty. After one year the Religious were rescued; and it pleased God, for the consolation of Alphonsus, who during all that time a hundred times a day had prayed for them, that they should happen first to land in Majorca, and thus all the College, and especially Brother Alphonsus, were able to console themselves together upon their invincible patience, and the great good effected by them in those barbarous lands. On his return, Lopez gave himself up to a saintly life, was in due time ordained Priest, and, undertaking the apostolic ministry of missioner, there was not a corner of all the kingdoms of Spain that he did not run over, reaping always

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immense fruit, and reclaiming many sinners. In this holy employment he continued till an extreme old age, having been universally proclaimed in his own time, Apostle of Spain. From these admirable events, and the great good effected, we understand what God meant in saying to His servant Alphonsus that that voyage should be of gold, although at first sight it appeared so unfortunate.

Other prophecies could be here given; as, for instance, one which was uttered for the consolation of Donna Eleonora Armadas, who had lost her son on his return from Rome, after having obtained two very honourable prebendaries. The Blessed Alphonsus gave her to know that although she had lost her son, the preferments should not pass from her family, but that one should be conferred on her nephew and the other upon a cousin, mentioning which each should have. And another case, in which he consoled a certain woman with the intelligence that her husband, whom she supposed to be dead, not having heard of him for many months, was alive in Valencia, and she would very quickly see him again, as it came to pass.

A war which desolated Spain during several years, was made known to him in a vision long before the event. This, the saint's first vision, was vouchsafed to him in 1568, previous to his entrance into Religion. One day, being in prayer, he recommended to God the wants of the universal Church with extraordinary fervour, and especially those of the Church

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of Spain, when he was ravished in spirit, and found himself, as it were, transported into the city of Granada, where a furious war was then raging. He beheld a magnificent and spacious basilica filled with the soldiers, and with horror witnessed the most dreadful desecration of that sacred edifice by the sacrilegious wretches feeding their horses on the very altar, above which was a beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin. The revolt of the Moors which took place the following year realized but too well the excess of the impiety and barbarity of the infidels, which God had shown him. Alphonsus had a second revelation which referred to himself alone, towards the end of his life. He was transported whilst in an ecstasy into the middle of the heavenly court, and as it were surrounded by a troop of celestial spirits, who seemed to accompany him everywhere. A voice then distinctly announced to him the combats he would have to undergo, and encouraged him to persevere manfully to the end, the term of which was not far distant. But to animate him to repulse generously the assaults which the emissaries of hell had prepared for him, he was shown at one view the entire Kingdom of Majorca. "See," said a voice to him, "this island, and believe me you will be one day honoured there as a saint; and, moreover, that your memory will be venerated throughout the world on account of the innumerable miracles which will be operated through you by the gracious and omnipotent power of God." Aware of this vision,

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the devil began against our saint the warfare which had been announced to him. The infernal spirit had tried to discourage him on his entrance into Religion, by representing to him that he could not succeed, as he was considered a useless subject, though on the other hand his beloved Protectress, the ever Blessed Virgin, assured her servant that he would die in the Society. But at this time the enemy endeavoured to tempt him to presumption. He incessantly depicted to him the glory he was one day to enjoy, the homages which would be rendered to God at his tomb, and the prodigies which would be operated through his intercession. The humble Religious in vain entered into the depths of his own nothingness, on which the tempter said to him, that this profound humility rendered him still greater before God; but that after all, he might well contemplate this elevation which had been promised him with a sentiment of complacency, since it tended to the glory of God; and that there was more merit in enjoying than in repulsing the impression which presented itself, since the honour of the Divine Majesty alone was in question. This reasoning so perplexed Alphonsus that he knew not how to oppose it; his only recourse was to recur to his Divine Master and His ever Blessed Mother. He did so, and they immediately appeared to him, and chased away the demon, forbidding him ever again to torment the saint with this species of temptation. The enemy did not consider himself vanquished—he

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prepared new snares. Before, however, relating the humble Brother's further combats with the powers of darkness, we will depict the heavenly visions in which God manifested to him the glory that several of the Religious of his Society had attained.

Father Bartholomew Coe, who had governed the College of Majorca during eleven years, was on the point of receiving the recompense of his virtues. Whilst all the Religious surrounded his death-bed, Alphonsus kneeling at the door of the chamber, prayed with fervour for the dying Priest, when he saw the heavens opened, and a multitude of Angels hastening to prepare a place amongst them for a new comer. The holy Brother asked for whom such great preparations were making, and he was answered that it was for the Father who was dying. He was also assured that on a future day the same splendour should be his lot. The vision disappeared at the moment that the Superior breathed his last, and it contributed not a little to console Alphonsus for a loss which otherwise he would have felt very deeply.

In June, 1601, Brother James Ruiz died at the College of Majorca. He was a man of eminent sanctity, who, in the humble office of cook, acquired an immense treasure of merits for Heaven. All the leisure time his occupations admitted of, he devoted to prayer, almost always prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament. His devotion to the Blessed Virgin was admirable, and his spirit of mortification so astonish-

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ing, that during thirty years, according to Alphonsus, who never lost sight of him, he did not afford himself a moment's recreation. After the death of this good Religious, our saint, faithful to the rule of reciting three rosaries for the repose of the soul of the deceased, had commenced the third rosary, when he was ravished in spirit into Heayen, and saw Brother Ruiz in the enjoyment of glory, near the Blessed Virgin. He hesitated whether he would continue his prayers, but our Blessed Lady intimated to him that Brother Ruiz did not want prayers, and that it would be much better to invoke her for his own necessities. She moreover permitted him to relate to others what he had seen.

Our saint kept up a very intimate friendship with Father John Rico. From the following fact it will be seen what a fund of virtue the latter possessed. On one occasion that he preached, the church was thronged by the multitude who were attracted chiefly by the preacher's reputation. The Father spoke in the Castilian language with great elegance. After the sermon our saint, who attended him, heard the people murmuring when going out of the church, because that language is not well understood by the common people at Majorca, of which a great part of the audience consisted. Alphonsus hesitated about communicating what he had heard to Father Rico, who was then his Superior. Having consulted his spiritual director on the matter, he stated what he heard with much respect to the preacher; the

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latter received the intimation in a manner which proved how confirmed he was in humility, and from that period he always preached in the vulgar tongue. This Father died at Urgel, in 1605. The news of his death having arrived at Majorca, Alphonsus prayed for him with particular fervour, when the Father appeared to him resplendent with light, and told him that he occupied a very elevated throne in Heaven, in recompense for the labours he had undergone while on earth. From that time our saint invoked him in his necessities, whose power with God he was sure of, and each time he had recourse to his new intercessor, he appeared to him surrounded with the same degree of glory.

Our Divine Redeemer revealed to Alphonsus the blessed condition of another Religious at the moment he had expired. He was a young man of one of the first houses in the kingdom. He entered Religion in the bloom of youth, after having triumphed over innumerable obstacles which his parents placed in the way. Having terminated his novitiate at Tarragon, he pursued his course of philosophy at Majorca; at the end of a year, in 1615, he fell sick and did not recover. He possessed an angelic purity, but was greatly tormented by scruples, which God made use of to purify more and more his innocent soul. In his last moments he asked his director if it would be an imperfection to ask Alphonsus to pray that the Almighty would free him from his anxieties. Being assured that he might do so, he sent for the

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holy Brother who, by the ardour of his supplications, effectually obtained that peace which is above all understanding, and to which the afflicted soul was so long a stranger. The dying man then asked that Alphonsus should not leave him till he had expired. He died shortly after in his arms; and to testify his gratitude, he soon appeared to the holy Brother in glory, and assured him of the delight he would feel on meeting him when in his turn he should first enter into his heavenly country.

Finally, the Lord deigned to make known to His servant that his two sisters, Julienne and Antoinette, were already in possession of infinite glory, which they merited by their holy lives. Both died at Segovia in 1614. These pious sisters had lived together in the state of holy virginity, retired from the false charms of the world, never leaving their house except to go to the church. Alphonsus loved them tenderly, not only on account of the ties of blood which united them to him, but especially for their eminent virtues. He had written to them several times to animate them to advance continually with fervour in the way of perfection, and God had previously promised him that they should go straight to Heaven after their death without passing through Purgatory. The younger died first, in July; and Julienne followed her some months after, having petitioned God not to leave her long after so beloved a sister. They were honoured by magnificent obsequies at Segovia, and their memory

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was long in benediction in that city. Alphonsus desired earnestly to obtain from Heaven an assurance of their happiness, and they appeared to him one day, clothed with robes braided with gold, surrounded with light, and kneeling before the Lamb, singing that new canticle which only His spouses can intone. The joy which beamed on their faces afforded ineffable happiness to their holy brother; and they gave him to understand that in a few years he would be associated with them in bliss. Alphonsus had a third sister engaged in the married state; she died at Madrid; and the holy Brother praying for her earnestly one day, it was revealed to him that at that instant her soul was released from Purgatory and had entered into glory.

These visions continued to increase exceedingly in Alphonsus the desire he ardently entertained of being united indissolubly to his God and his Divine Master, Who prepared to bestow a magnificent crown of justice on His faithful servant, and permitted that the rage of the devils should complete the rendering him worthy of so exalted a degree of glory which was destined for him in the Kingdom of Heaven.

We have already related that our saint often asked of God that he might be deemed worthy to suffer for His love the torments of the martyrs. The manner in which this prayer was heard is most remarkable; and though we read of similar trials in the lives of some of the Saints, none of them appear to

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have been so severe as those which we are going to relate. The holy Brother had attained a good old age when he one day served at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. He was astonished at not experiencing that sensible devotion which almost always accompanied him during that sacred action. At the moment of the Elevation he heard a voice which distinctly desired him to prepare for a great combat with the powers of hell, and at the same time promised him that powerful aid from above would not be wanting to him in so terrible a conflict. On being thus apprized, the generous Alphonsus renewed the oblation of himself to suffer everything for the love of his Divine Master.

The time soon arrived which called forth the exercise of all his faith and constancy. The following night Alphonsus beheld a crowd of demons enter his chamber in the most hideous forms; they surrounded him, howling in the most frightful manner, and sought to terrify him still more by horrid menaces. But soon perceiving that the servant of Christ was not disturbed by these vain demonstrations, they seized him, struck him, lacerated his flesh in various parts, and covered his body with wounds. During this cruel persecution the holy Religious remained perfectly calm in the interior of his soul, and gained renewed strength by repeating the adorable names of Jesus and Mary. His intrepidity overwhelmed his cruel enemies with inexpressible rage. They retired, being obliged with confusion to confess that they had been

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vanquished this time, but they resolved soon to return to the combat with infinitely more fury than ever. In fact, they were determined not to be overcome by so despicable a creature, and returned during the night with instruments of torture, enough to daunt the most intrepid soul, such as whips, iron combs, burning hooks, and all others which the cruelty of the ancient persecutors invented to torture the holy martyrs of the primitive Church. They furiously attacked our dear saint, dragged him out of bed, threw him into a boiling cauldron, then taking him out, extended him on the floor, and began to torment him with a barbarity worthy the executioners of hell. It appeared to him that they burnt him with red hot sheets of metal and flat stones, then tore off his flesh with the hooks, broke his bones, and even his very entrails were torn out, so violent were the tortures they inflicted on him. So far from being overcome with these horrible torments, he exclaimed: "Yet more, O Lord, yet more." In the end, being flayed to such a degree that nothing remained but his bare bones, they buried him beneath a heap of live coals. It was not material fire, such as we have here below, but flames so active and penetrating, that, after having for some time resisted the violence of the pain, he felt his strength failing him, and prayed that God would put an end to the horrible torture.

This dreadful martyrdom suffered with so great fortitude moved the divine pity. Our Divine Redeemer

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appeared to him, put an end to his trials, dispersed the cursed executioners, perfectly healed his wounds, so that his body retained no trace of the barbarous treatment he had undergone, and restored sweet peace and joy to his soul. Alphonsus a thousand times thanked the Divine Goodness which had snatched him from his enemies, but he was overwhelmed with confusion when he reflected that he had not had the courage to sustain the combat any longer. How all this happened will no doubt appear incredible to those who have not read or considered the conflicts of an Anthony and other great Saints with the fiends of hell. By whatever means it was done, let it suffice that our dear saint was awake, in his full senses, and actually felt all those real though dreadful torments here cursorily described.

From that time the infernal spirits were no longer permitted to renew those trials; they contented themselves with annoying him for three years by the noise which they made in his chamber. The last year of the holy Brother's life the devil tempted him to despair, and not having it in his power to represent to him any actual sins which he had committed, he repeated incessantly—"Art thou convinced that there exists not in the depths of thy heart some unknown sin? Canst thou be certain that thou will not one day commit a mortal sin, which will be the cause of thy damnation?" These thoughts, which Alphonsus could not get rid of, caused him intense

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uneasiness. At last, during the assault of this temptation, a celestial voice thus addressed the tempter —"What hast thou to do with my servant? He has for a long time been mine, and he will always belong to me." These words calmed the agitation of Alphonsus, and were the pledge of that eternal peace which the Lord was soon to bestow on him in Heaven.

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BOOK III.

Our saint had never enjoyed perfect health since his entrance into Religion; however, in spite of his infirmities and frequent maladies, he was able to fill for thirty years the office of porter. It is true that nothing short of his zeal and courage could support for such a long time, and with such enfeebled strength, the labour of this employment; but when he had attained his seventieth year, his body worn down with continual sufferings and mortification, he fell into such a state of exhaustion that he was obliged to have an assistant, to spare him the inconvenience of going up and down the stairs of the College so often during the day. In the end it pleased his Superiors to relieve him from this office and to give him an occupation more easy to him and more suitable to his infirm age; leaving him, too, more at leasure to enjoy the quiet contemplation of Mary at the feet of Jesus, after having so long practised the busy life of Martha. This was to accompany the Fathers who repaired to the houses not far distant; and when he was not occupied elsewhere, he spent almost the entire mornings in serving

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and hearing Masses in the church. He was soon unable to descend the steps, and could no longer assist at the divine mysteries except in the private chapel. He composed about this time a little spiritual treatise by order of his Superiors, written indeed in a simple and plain style, but full of unction and of the most elevated sentiments worthy of the author. His spiritual consolations now increased in such abundance, that the capacity of his soul being unequal to their greatness, he was obliged to beg of God to diminish them. When he had attained the age of eighty his infirmities increased to such a degree, that the remainder of his life was one of continual pain; his feet swelled immensely, the sores of his legs increased in an alarming manner, and an obstinate cough gave him no rest day or night; it was often feared that he would be suffocated, so violent were his fits of coughing; he was also attacked with the stone, and this dreadful malady caused him to endure a long martyrdom.

In the midst of so many trials, Alphonsus unceasingly praised and blessed our Lord, he lost none of his serenity, and was by his heroic constancy the admiration of all who approached him; if he spoke, it was not to ask relief from God, but to pray to Him to render his cross yet more heavy. He obtained what he desired; for in the year 1617, which was the last of his life, continual pains in the stomach and dreadful colics were added to the complication of maladies which overwhelmed him. From that time

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forward he kept his bed; and being unable to lie down, because that position suffocated him, he remained in a sitting posture, his back supported by his pillow, and unable even to stir his legs. He was seized from time to time with fever, and when it left him his pains were not diminished. The physicians declared that they did not comprehend his malady, and that they had no hopes of curing him. The holy sufferer regarded each of his pains as an inestimable treasure, and feared nothing so much as to be deprived of them. He had passed several nights without sleep in consequence of a great head-ache. He had one night a quarter of an hour's repose; this short sleep afflicted him; he could not refrain from complaining of it to the young students who came sometimes to visit him. When they asked him if his last night had been better than the preceding ones, "I have slept for a quarter of an hour," replied the saint, "and I regret it, for then I did not suffer, and when we cease to suffer, we cease to merit." The next day in speaking of his sufferings, and forgetting the conversation of the previous evening, he said to those who surrounded him—"I know a person who passed three nights without sleeping, with the exception of a quarter of an hour, and it was revealed to him that he had acquired no merit during that quarter of an hour;" and he exclaimed, "Oh! that we never wanted sleep, or that in our sleep we could also suffer for the love of God and for our own merit."

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The devils, who had presecuted Alphonsus in so unheard of a manner during his life, redoubled their efforts against him when attacked by his last illness. He was seized in the month of April by a troublesome temptation of despondency, the more insupportable, as he continually laboured under the apprehension of falling into some fault. The interior anguish which these thoughts gave him was so great that his bodily pains, though causing him to feel as if his bowels were lacerated and torn from him, yet seemed comparatively light to it. He was also at this time tried by his Heavenly Master with spiritual dryness, anxiety, and desolation, which deeply afflicted him: he felt as though his Divine Redeemer with His holy Mother and all the Saints had forgotten him. His relish for prayer, his heavenly consolations, his holy thoughts, all ceased. He moreover completely forgot all the prayers and pious ejaculations he was accustomed to use, and even felt some difficulty in recalling to mind the Lord's Prayer. In this abandonment, finding nowhere either repose or relief, he could scarcely waft a sigh towards Heaven. Our dear saint was too enlightened not to perceive that God permitted this storm to be raised by the enemies of his salvation; and to calm the tempest, he humbled himself the more before God and man, and begged of the brethren who came to visit him, that they would read to him some passages of the Psalms, or the Soliloquies of St. Austin. But the contest was not at an end, and the scruples which

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the devils excited in his mind eventually threw him into a most melancholy and gloomy state; yet notwithstanding all this, he relaxed not in the least from his accustomed devotions in prayers and spiritual reading. God was pleased that in default of the sword of tyrants, the fire of tribulation should purify His servant in the severest crucible, and immolate him as a martyr of the purest charity. During the space of five months the saint was a prey to this kind of agony, more cruel than death itself, when calm was at length restored after so long a tempest: for behold on a sudden the Queen of Heaven, with her beloved Infant in her arms, surrounded with a blaze of celestial light, appeared to him. They conversed with him for a long time, and after giving him the most tender demonstrations of affection, they animated him to persevere to the end on the cross, assuring him that it was necessary, and that nothing more was wanting to him here below but to suffer to the end. This vision shed peace and serenity on his soul, and replenished him with joy incomparably greater than had been his past anguish and distress. It is true that from this time forward these sufferings were not without consolation; scarcely ever did he invoke our Blessed Lord and His holy Mother without seeing them near him; and the graces which he received from them wonderfully alleviated his corporal pains, and enabled him to acquit himself faithfully of all his exercises of piety as if he were in the enjoyment of health. The Holy Eucharist seemed

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to constitute his strength. He communicated three times in the week, notwithstanding his extreme exhaustion and acute sufferings, and God was pleased to permit that no obstacle should arise to deprive him of so great a happiness. It was moreover most remarkable, though for the last three months of his life he was unable to move himself in his bed, being compelled to lie all that time on one side, when there was question of his going to receive the Bread of Angels—whether it was that his lively faith rendered him capable of such an extraordinary effort, or that his Divine Master communicated to him supernatural strength—he rose and put himself in a most respectful posture to adore the ever Blessed Sacrament. It was also observed that every time a clergyman entered his room, he uncovered his head instantly, in veneration of the exalted character of the Priesthood and in conformity with the rule of the Brothers of his Order, which prescribes this respect from them. When the blessed Brother thought that he was alone, he called aloud on God in the most imploring way—"Give me, O my good God, more pain, more sufferings, more humiliations, but add to this desirable favour a greater abundance of real charity and patience, to endure all that Thou art pleased to send me." It was intimated to him eight days previous to his death to prepare for the Extreme Unction; he received the intelligence with joy, and yet it was evident that he did not consider his last hour so very near. He confessed with that

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fervour and contrition, which characterized his reception of the holy sacrament of reconciliation, and he received the unction of the dying with as much tranquillity as if he had assisted at this holy ceremony instead of being himself the object of it, replying distinctly to all the prayers of the Church.

His ordinary complaints in his sickness were that there was too much care taken about him, who desired rather to be altogether forgotten or detested as carrion, or a dead beast. When the Rector once bade him take a few conserves or sweetmeats to comfort him, he answered him—"Believe me, Father, these sweet things are pains unto me, and these pains sweetness;" which answer he usually gave to those who asked him how he did. By reason of his great familiarity and conversation with our Lord Jesus and His ever Blessed Virgin Mother, he spoke to them with great affection the following words, which he had learned from our Blessed Saviour Himself—"O Jesus and Mary, my only comfort, grant me that I may suffer and die for your love, and that I may be wholly yours and not mine own." Once when he could scarcely speak, the infirmarian asked what troubled him, to which he replied—"Nothing but self-love."

Some of the members of the College wished to know if God had revealed to His servant the precise time of his departure from this world, and begged of the infirmarian to find it out from him if possible. An opportunity offered shortly after—whilst reading

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to our saint the edifying life of St. Catharine, an Augustinian Nun celebrated for her virtues, and who had predicted a long time previously the day and hour of her death, the infirmarian then said to Alphonsus, "Brother, will you not tell me if God has revealed to you what time you are to die?" The holy Brother replied, "We may be deceived on this head, and it may avail us little to know when or where we are to die—let us be always ready for the summons of an awful Judge." On another occasion the infirmarian resumed the subject, and Alphonsus again dissembling said, "Brother, such a question ought to be considered as a temptation. Our life belongs to God, and He will send death when He pleases. May His Divine Majesty find us prepared for that last passage! We ought to bestow all our attention in preparing ourselves for it, as far as is in our power, in order that we may be ready when the Lord calls us; it is in this our happiness consists. What would it avail me to know and to announce when I should die? It will be when God pleases; and has not our Lord Jesus Christ declared, 'Happy the wise and vigilant servant who keeps always on the watch, expecting the arrival of his Master?' It is he who will take part in the celestial nuptials and in the eternal festival of the Spouse." Notwithstanding the secrecy which his humility made him preserve on the revelation which God favoured him with on the matter, the infirmarian at length extracted from him, in an indirect manner, the avowal he wished to

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obtain. He informed Alphonsus that the Father Rector did not wish to go to perform the Spiritual Exercises in a house out of the city belonging to the College, lest he should die in his absence. "The Father has done very well," said Alphonsus, "and I take his charity in very good part; he can recommend me to the Lord, and will really assist at my death." Alphonsus died in fact at the end of five days, and the Father Superior was present when he breathed his last. But on reflection the holy Brother perceived the innocent artifice which had been used to extract his secret, and testified some uneasiness at it; he then acknowledged that he did not wish to converse any more with men. On the 28th of October the blessed patient, who had communcated thrice since receiving Extreme Unction, suddenly closed his eyes, and for some time remained motionless. He appeared to hear nothing, though spoken to in a loud voice; and to be insensible to all around him, except to receive what the infirmarian offered to him, for he practised obedience even to his last moments. It was judged that something extraordinary passed within him, for his countenance appeared serene and beautiful, and evinced no appearance of suffering; his eyes beamed with a heavenly joy when at times he opened them; his pulse was not lowered, and was found even stronger than usual. All who saw him were of opinion that he was in an ecstasy during these three days, and that God gave him a foretaste of the

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delights of Paradise. It was, besides, the accomplishment of the promise which our Divine Redeemer had made to console him at his death.

Although his sickness had disfigured his body, yet after his ecstasy he became beautiful as an Angel, and as red as a rose, which were certain proofs of the flame which burnt in his breast, and broke out by those exterior signs and exclamations which he uttered from time to time—"O sweet Jesus, O my dear Mother," and the like. Peace and content also returned to his soul, and vigour to his pulse; while the Community standing around him enjoyed and partook of the delight of this devout and ravishing spectacle; as they were bitterly regretting the loss of such a heroic model of virtue, the speechless Alphonsus opened his eyes and saluted them all with a smiling look of holy love and charity. On the 30th, a little before midnight, he came out of his long ecstasy, pronouncing the holy name of Jesus; his terrible pains returned at the same time, and he did nothing but repeat these words, "Yet more, good Lord, yet more," and as he endeavoured to prepare for his last struggle he suddenly fell into a swoon; he had no longer any pulse, and every symptom announced that his holy soul was going to be united to its Blessed Creator. As his pains had been his companions during life, so God would have them attend him in his death, after the example of his Blessed Lord and Saviour, the sacred wounds of Whose crucifix he was constantly embracing. All

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the inmates of the College were immediately informed that the holy Brother was dying, and all eagerly hastened to receive the last sigh of the just man. The oldest Fathers considered themselves happy in assisting at this death; each touched with his chaplet the hands of the dying saint, so great was the opinion entertained of his sanctity. Alphonsus was half an hour in his agony, after which he opened his eyes, which he had kept continually closed during the three days. He regarded all who were present with a look of affection and gratitude, which filled each of them with unspeakable consolation; he then gently cast his eyes [which were observed to be more quick and lively than when he was in the best health] on the image of Jesus Crucified, which he held in his hands, fixing them on it with profound emotion, and kissing the feet of the crucifix, and saying, "O sweet Jesus," he gave up the ghost, between the hours of twelve and one o'clock on the 31st day of October, the eve of All Saints, 1617, being eighty-six years three months and five days old.

Alphonsus was of middle size, rather stooping from age, thin, naturally robust, his head bald and venerable, his look grave but good-natured, his forehead much wrinkled with age, his nose aquiline, his eyes large and piercing and almost always inflamed from the tears of devotion which incessantly flowed from them, his gait slow, his voice gentle, his conversation forcible and eloquent on spiritual subjects, his mind ready, active, solid, and prudent, and his countenance

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and exterior deportment depicted so well the peace of his soul, that Father Collin attests in the Life of the holy Brother, that he was struck from the first time he saw him, with the air of sanctity which diffused itself over his person, and everything in him breathed the most profound recollection and religious decorum.

Death did not disfigure the venerable Brother; on the contrary, it seemed to shed a more heavenly light over him—his countenance appeared more beautiful than when he was alive, inspiring feelings of piety and religion into the beholders, instead of that sentiment of awe and horror which the sight of dead persons generally creates; in fact he resembled a person in the most peaceable sleep. His body was clothed in the Religious habit and placed in a coffin, which was left open to be exposed in the church of the Society.

Scarcely had the day began to dawn, than the news of his happy death was spread throughout the city; crowds of persons, even of the highest rank, came to satisfy their esteem for and devotion to him whom they looked upon as a saint, and such was their veneration for him that every one was eager to touch his holy remains and kiss his hands and feet. Amongst others, was the Viceroy, with all the nobility, and King's officers—ecclesiastical and Religious men. Having removed the body to the church, the next day the obsequies were performed with great solemnity, but from the immense pressure of the crowd in the church the entire day, it was deemed necessary to

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wait until the next day to carry him to the sepulchre. All the Religious Orders came to sing the Office of the Dead—the Dominicans, the Mercedes, Franciscans, Augustinians, Trinitarians, Minions, with the Superiors and Provincials, as also the entire Chapter of Canons and all the Priests and Pastors of the town. Incredible multitudes came to touch his body with their beads, or to get some little piece of his habit or garments for relics, and the sick came to touch him; insomuch that six of the Society, and two Fathers of St. Dominic who assisted, were insufficient to reach the beads and medals wrapped in handkerchiefs and thrown by the people who could not get near enough to touch the precious body. The Office of the Dead being said, as the custom is, there was made a short sermon, only to declare to the people some few particulars of his life, during which time no man presumed to cover his head in the presence of the sacred corpse, though the church was as full as it could hold, and a breathless silence prevailed. They solemnly interred him in a vault of the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, on the side of the altar, over which hung a picture of her glorious Assumption, it being supposed that the Queen of Heaven would be pleased that the ashes of her servant should repose near her image.

The aforesaid Viceroy, nobility, ecclesiastics, and Regulars were again present, as also the lord Bishop, who the day before was sick and could not attend.

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The rare virtue of this holy Brother was in such esteem, that not only those of his own Province, but also of Italy, Castile, Andalusia, Portugal, and the Indies, sent to Majorca with earnest entreaties for some of his relics. Many Cardinals, grave ecclesiastics and seculars, grandees of Spain, and others wrote to him in his lifetime, commending themselves to his prayers, and for the purpose of procuring his autograph.

Several miraculous cures previous to his interment attested the power of his intercession with God; amongst the many was that of a child about nine months old, whose eyes had no pupils, and could not bear the light for a moment; moreover, tears flowed continually from them, and no efficacious remedy could be found for an evil with which the child was born. The afflicted mother had no hope, as may be easily believed, but in the merits of Alphonsus, whom she always looked upon as a saint. She repaired to the church the day on which the body was exposed, and holding her infant in her arms, believed with the liveliest faith and confidence, that if she could have the diseased eyes touched by the corpse, they would be immediately cured. She was not confounded in her hope, and her strong faith was rewarded by the instantaneous recovery of her child as soon as he was placed near the remains of the holy Alphonsus.

Another child was also instantaneously cured of sore eyes, and another of a malignant fever, by being

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wrapped in linen which had touched the body of the deceased.

In the devout eagerness of the people crowding round the bier in order to touch his body, a huge and ponderous candlestick was thrown down on the head of one of the persons, without causing the least sensation of pain, although the size, weight, and fall of it were such as naturally to have fractured the skull. There was present in the church a certain female, who, observing the people touching the bier with their beads, remarked with indifference, "I feel little concern about devotion to a dead man, since there are saints enough in Heaven to obtain for me any grace I want." This same woman, two months afterwards, fell grievously sick. Her husband, finding no medicine avail her, brought her a relic belonging to Alphonsus, which she slighted with the same indifference; but as the violence of her distemper greatly increased, she submitted at last to touch herself with it, and to recommend herself to the servant of God, who, returning good for evil, first suddenly relieved her from all pain, and then gradually restored her to her perfect health, so that, repenting of her mistrust and the wrong she had done the saint, she became, and ever after continued, a devout client of Blessed Alphonsus.

This day was likewise distinguished for favours still greater, having for their immediate object the salvation of souls. The following is one instance of the kind amongst others. A person who, for a long

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period, had led a bad life, and from time to time sustained very severe conflicts in her soul, from the consideration of the risk she incurred of losing her eternal salvation, being attracted to the church by the obsequies of Blessed Alphonsus through curiosity, or rather by the secret dispensation of Providence, was deeply affected by the fervour with which all who assisted invoked the intercession of the deceased; and penetrated more than usual with horror for her criminal life, she conjured the servant of God to obtain her sincere conversion. Scarcely had she finished this prayer, when she felt herself entirely changed, and took the firm and generous resolution of at length putting an end to her wicked course of life. Her conversion was the cause of many others being drawn away from a sinful life, and of devoting themselves to the sweet service of God.

And to the end that some there present might open the eyes of their minds, shut through incredulity, our dear saint opened also his own eyes which death had closed—a thing no less admirable than profitable, for men conceived a great opinion of his holiness, whom Almighty God honoured with so great miracles. A certain Priest among the rest, not being very well contented to see the Viceroy and all the Senate, one after another, kiss the blessed Brother's hand, yet, lest he might give offence by omitting that duty which all others performed, resolved secretly not to kiss the holy man's hand as others did, but coming with the rest, to kiss the cross which he held

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in his hand, thereby intending to conceal his thoughts from the bystanders, which he could not do from the blessed deceased; for as soon as he came near, to the amazement of all, the saint opened his eyes, cast them with a smiling countenance upon the Priest, and stretching out his hand, seemed to invite him to kiss it. The Priest, astounded, presently with great reverence kissed it, and departing thence became wholly another man.

The favours which Heaven granted to the Faithful of all classes, who recommended themselves to the holy Brother, did not cease with the ceremonies of his obsequies, as the following cases will show—

Signora Antonina Blanquez, widow of Signor James Blanquez, forty-nine years of age, was afflicted with a violent and copious hemorrhage, so much so that for many days she lost nearly four pounds of blood a day, according to the evidence of the surgeon, Signor Melchiorre Genson, given in the process. The doctor of the parish, Signor Michael Creus, adopted every remedy that art suggested to stop the furious disease, but quite in vain. The patient felt no relief, but rather daily grew worse. Her fainting fits were very frequent, generally leaving her almost dead, and it was considered as certain by all that she would die in one of them. The 12th of November, 1617, had passed, when the doctor seeing the patient in that wretched condition, and believing that she would quickly die, ordered that the last Sacraments should be administered to her. To this end, Signor

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Don Antonio Banca, a Priest and a relation of the sick lady, ran in all haste to the College, to call Father Torrens, her confessor. Father Torrens attested in the process that when called for this purpose he felt himself inspired to take with him some relic of Brother Alphonsus, believing as surely as though he had seen it, that by means of such relic the lady would certainly be cured. Therefore he took a little piece of the cloak, and another of the shirt of the servant of God, and went with all haste to the house of the dying woman, assured that if he did not go quickly he ran the risk of being too late. On his arrival, he found the lady in a fainting fit, surrounded by many women, all of whom endeavoured with various remedies to restore her. As soon as she was somewhat returned to herself, the Father caused them all to leave the room, in order to hear her confession, but feeling herself totally deprived of strength, she said that though she wished to make her confession she was unable to speak from exhaustion. The Father suggested to her to say something that would make sufficient matter for absolution, as she could not say more, but lo, in an instant she again fainted, which rendered it necessary to call assistance. As many as were outside re-entered, and again proceeded to restore her to her senses. A second time she breathed a little, and then Father Torrens said, "Let all go out, for presently they shall see her entirely cured." This speech of the Father not only astonished, but moved to laughter all who heard it. Nevertheless, they went

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out, and then the Father, taking the relic of the servant of God, "Signora Antonina," he said, "this is a relic of Brother Alphonsus. If you recommend yourself to him he will obtain your cure." Thus speaking, he placed it beneath her finger. As much time as would suffice to recite an *Ave Maria* had not elapsed, when the invalid, uttering with great emotion the ejaculation, "Jesus, Jesus," said in a loud voice, "I am healed and am well." It was heard by all in the adjoining room, and they thought she was delirious. Therefore they re-entered, and one lady, named Margaret Serdana, approached the bed. "Signora Antonina," she said, "how do you feel?" "Signora," she replied, "I am now well, thanks to our Lord." The lady rejoined, "In Heaven we shall be well," to which the other answered, "No, no; think not that I am now delirious, for I am really very well; and a relic of Brother Alphonsus, that this Father has given me, has cured me, and I feel in such perfect health that I seem never to have been better in my whole life." The news spread itself quickly through the city, and reached the ears of the doctor and surgeon before mentioned, who ran immediately to satisfy themselves of the fact with their own eyes. When the doctor entered he did not believe himself, and asked if the lady had taken the draught he prescribed, and being answered in the negative he was still more astonished. He directed that the prescribed remedies should not be taken from the house, not being able to persuade himself that the disease could cease so

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suddenly as not to return. However, it did not return, but so far from it, the lady, the following morning, was able not only to rise from bed, but to go out of the house, and to the church of the Society, called Mount Sion, to offer her thanksgiving. Then the doctors were obliged to confess that such a cure was truly miraculous, neither nature itself, nor the remedies of science, being able to cure a malady so severe in an instant, as had happened in this case. Wherefore they had no difficulty in attesting it in the process to have been a true miracle, at least as to the manner of the cure, the surgeon asserting that, naturally speaking, though the lady might not have died of the disease, yet that at least six months would have been required to restore her to that state to which she had returned in a moment.

This miracle was the occasion of another. A poor woman, named Anna Figuerola, had been already for a long time afflicted with an obstinate fever, which, in addition to a most violent headache, caused her very severe fainting fits. On account of her poverty, she was unable to call in a doctor, but had only asked some advice of a good neighbour, named Nicolas Leva, who had ordered her to be thrice bled, but without any benefit. In this state, the poor woman was visited by a sister, who exhorted her to recommend herself to the Blessed Brother Alphonsus, and told her of the case of the Signora Blanquez. She did so, and ordered one of her sons, about twelve years old, to go to the tomb, and there recite the Rosary,

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and then touch the tomb with the beads and bring them to her. The boy punctually fulfilled all, and with singular devotion. As soon as she had received the beads, she placed them with much veneration on her head, from which all pain instantly vanished, and she told her sister that she did not seem to have now any more disease. Night came on, and the poor woman did not cease to pray Alphonsus to perfect the favour, at least in pity for her children, who would have so much to suffer in case she died. As she thus prayed, Alphonsus appeared to her, and though there was no kind of light in the room, so great was the lustre diffused from the hands alone of the saint, that all the room was resplendent as in mid-day. At this sight the woman, with her eyes full of tears, began to implore him to have pity on her poor boys, showing him all the three in the bed with her. Alphonsus, by a motion of the head, showed his willingness to grant the favour, and when she wished to kiss his hand he disappeared. She then fell asleep, and slept sweetly all the night, awoke in the morning and found herself so well that she dressed herself, and set about her household work as though she had not been ill.

Francesca Aleman, wife of Antonio Ginard, an accountant, had for two months one of her breasts immensely swollen, and as hard as a stone. The husband, on the day of the burial of Alphonsus, to whom he was very devout, had procured a small piece of his vest, which he had consigned to his wife to keep as a relic. Antonio exhorted her to place it

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upon the diseased part, but, unlike her husband, having very little faith in the saint, she had always refused to make use of it. The pain increased one day so much that she nearly lost her senses. Then, taking the relic, "Now," she said, "we shall see if Brother Alphonsus is so great a saint as they say," and thereupon she touched the part, saying at the same time a *Pater noster*. She had not yet finished, when an immense quantity of fetid matter issued out, which had caused the large swelling and excessive pain, and she immediately found herself much better. She then promised to make a novena to the blessed servant of God, and to get a Mass said in his honour, nor had two days passed when she found herself perfectly well, whence, changing her opinion, she held Brother Alphonsus to be a saint indeed.

Giovanna Companya, thirty-eight years of age, in the month of February, 1618, being much fatigued and in a great perspiration from baking, lay down on her bed, and the cold clothes chilling the perspiration, she entirely lost the use of the left arm, and after eight months was unable to work at all, or even to move it. No remedies had at all assisted her, when she was inspired with the hope that by touching a cloth which was upon the tomb of the saint, she should be cured. She accordingly went to the church, but could not accomplish her wish; nevertheless, she did not lose her confidence, and began a novena in his honour, on the seventh day of which she took a small piece of cloth, and placed it under another which had lain in

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the tomb of the saint. The last day of the novena she brought it home, and assisted by an aunt, placed it upon the withered arm. Scarcely had she dressed herself, with the intention of returning again to the church, than she felt strength return to the arm in a moment, was able to move and raise it to her head, and from that day it was perfectly well, as though she had had no previous ailment.

Anna Bianca was favoured in the case of a little boy six years old, who was in extremities from a severe fall. The father, a surgeon, had used all the means his art suggested, but in vain, and the boy every day drew nearer his end. The mother, one day conceiving the hope that Blessed Alphonsus was able to cure him, recommended herself to the saint, and desired to go in person to his tomb to recommend the child, but seeing its wretched state, she was afraid to hazard the leaving home, fearing that she might not find him alive on her return. She stood for some time in this suspense, but finally, feeling herself urged to go, she went, and with all the tenderness of a mother, recommended him to the servant of God. Having ended her prayer, she returned, and found an unexpected wonder—the boy not only not dead, but not even in bed or ill, and already cured; he had dressed himself, was very merry, and at play with his little brother.

Donna Girolama Verard, for many years, and for a long time each year, in the spring, suffered from an enormous swelling in one of her legs, and was

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unable to move it. In the year 1618, instead of being copiously bled, as had been ordered by the doctor, she knelt down and recited three *Paters* and *Aves* in honour of the Blessed Alphonsus, and placed upon the leg a linen cloth which had been laid upon the face of the saint after death, and suddenly felt herself bathed in a profuse perspiration, and the limb entirely well, and she never afterwards suffered from that complaint.

In the year 1627, Francesca Gil, wife of John Villanova, had a little boy four years old, named Raffael, afflicted from his birth with a monstrous hernia, caused by a severe rupture of the right groin, and was unable to stand, unless very well trussed. One night, being greatly afflicted with the severe pain, and also suddenly attacked by a burning fever, he was visited by his mother for the purpose of adjusting his truss. At the sight of so protruding and ugly a swelling in that little body, she was deeply moved to compassion, and the Blessed Alphonsus occurring to her mind, she began to exhort the child to recommend himself to him, which he immediately did, begging the servant of God for help, and asked for a picture, but as none had been then distributed, in order to satisfy him, they gave him another as the likeness of Alphonsus. The child took it with all affection, and placed it upon the affected part, invoking the saint until he fell asleep. After two days, the mother examined the part, and found it totally healed up. The child, being interrogated as

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to the manner in which the cure had been effected, answered that in that very night Alphonsus had appeared to him, untied the truss, touched the tumour, and thus healed him. They then inquired about his features, and the child replied that *it was an old man.* Then his father, to try if he could distinguish between old age and youth, "*And I,*" said he, "*how old am I?*" "*You are young, and Alphonsus is old,*" replied the child. From this reply, together with the cure, it was clearly manifest that the boy had been miraculously healed by the saint; this was confirmed by the fact that the cure was perfect and permanent.

Prodigies were multiplied to such an extent, that a whole volume would not suffice to contain them, and the devotion of the people became so general and so earnest, that it was considered necessary, in order to respond to the wishes of the entire kingdom, to solicit from the Bishop permission to expose on the tomb of the servant of God one of the likenesses which had been taken of him. The Bishop, Don Simon Bausa, O.S.D., wished to follow on this occasion the order of judicial information. He ordered an inquiry to be made into the virtues and miracles of Blessed Alphonsus, and, after a mature examination, the Prelate permitted that the picture should be deposited with solemnity over the spot where he was laid. The place was soon ornamented with flowers by the piety of the inhabitants of the city, who came in crowds to the tomb of him whom they already looked upon as their protector.

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Two months had not elapsed since the death of our saint, when the Viceroy of Majorca, Don Pedro Zuñort, wrote to the Sovereign Pontiff, then Paul V., the following letter, dated January 1, 1618—

"Most Holy Father,—

"The Bishop of Majorca has just commanded, at the request of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, that information should be taken on the holy life, happy death, and miracles of Alphonsus Rodriguez, Lay-brother of the said Society. The Lord has deigned to grant great favours to this kingdom through his intercession, and I trust He will confer still more special ones through the prayers of this great servant of His, on account of the lively confidence the inhabitants of my kingdom place in his intercession. These wonders, the number of which increases every day, and openly proclaim the glory which the venerable Brother enjoys, induces me to cast myself at the feet of your Holiness, to supplicate, in the name of this entire kingdom, in virtue of the office which I hold, that you will be propitious to the earnest wishes of the Faithful, and approve, by your apostolic authority, the honours rendered to the servant of God. This will be an incentive to the people to go with more confidence to his tomb, and the whole kingdom will receive this favour with the most lively gratitude, the remembrance of which will never be effaced; and they will not cease to pray to the Lord to prolong the life

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of your Holiness, and to replenish it with His gifts, for the benefit of the Christian universe."

The death of Paul V., which happened soon after, prevented the matter from being pursued at that time. Gregory XV. succeeded him, whose Pontificate was very short, but the petition was renewed on the accession of Urban VIII. This Pope enacted several decrees relative to the public veneration of the servants of God not yet beatified, and immediately ordered that the picture of the holy Brother, and the other votive offerings, which the Faithful had suspended against the walls, should be withdrawn from the chapel where the body of our saint reposed, a measure which was then taken with regard to the other holy persons who died in the odour of sanctity, but who had not been then beatified by the Holy See. At last, at the request of the Catholic King and of all the Orders of the kingdom of Spain, Urban VIII. granted that the informations already taken under the inspection of the Bishops of Majorca and Segovia, in the diocese where Alphonsus was born and died, should be submitted to the examination of the Congregation of Rites. On the 20th of September, 1625, the same Pontiff appointed the Commission, called the induction of the case, and ordered that the inquiries for the Beatification should be made, under the authority of the Apostolic See, in the diocese of which we have just spoken. At this time were received the depositions of a great number

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of ocular witnesses, who having for the most part lived with Alphonsus, had many opportunities of admiring his heroic virtues, amongst whom were ecclesiastics, persons of the highest rank in society, Father Gille, the holy Brother's Superior, and other members of the Society of Jesus. We shall relate some interesting circumstances in the life of the holy man, which were collected purposely to form part of the process of his Beatification, and which have been omitted in the course of this history. We must recollect, whilst reading this recital, that it is extracted from the deposition of witnesses judicially interrogated. To relate all the glorious and convincing testimonies with which his virtues and merits have been thus honoured, would swell out this volume far beyond its prescribed limits; we may therefore make this general observation, that it is a matter of great wonder that so many persons, distinguished for their sanctity, prudence, learning, and authority, should have condescended to court the friendship and seek the advice of a simple and humble Lay-brother. It can only be explained by the firm and infinite persuasion they entertained that the success of their affairs, spiritual or temporal, depended in great measure on his intercession with God. The letters which he received from them, used to fill him with so much confusion, that he always tore the signature away from them, and then used them to write his little notes upon. Thus, amongst others, Don J. Ribera, Patriarch and Archbishop of Valencia, a Prelate of

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most extraordinary merit, often honoured the holy Brother with letters on the spiritual concerns of his soul.

The illustrious Cardinal Gaspar Borgia delighted in writing to him from Rome, in recommending himself to his prayers, and receiving letters from him.

The Bishop and different Viceroys of Majorca uniformly held him in the highest esteem and veneration, and constantly petitioned his prayers.

Provincials, Rectors, and Visitors of the College of Majorca have left on record their decisive judgment of his heroical sanctity and extraordinary graces.

Father Anthony Yuagnez, Provincial of Arragon, was accustomed to rise to the holy Brother whenever he came into his room, and to remain standing with his head uncovered until he left him; disguising this honour, meant solely for him, under some other pretext. Another Father Provincial, P. Laurence a Saint Jean, wished to take Blessed Alphonsus from Majorca, in order to impart the fruits and benefit of his most perfect example to other parts of the Society; but he feared the displeasure of the people, who would not suffer themselves to be deprived of so great a saint.

The humility of our saint was so profound that he considered himself wholly unworthy to touch the book of the Holy Scriptures; and though he understood Latin sufficiently well to comprehend the sacred text, yet each time that he had occasion in his spiritual writings to refer to a passage in the Old or

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New Testament, he begged of a student of the College to transcribe it for him, avowing that it was unfit for an ignorant Lay-brother like him to open the Holy Scriptures. He ever held the greatest veneration for Priests, so much so that he never covered his head in their presence, or seated himself beside them. He extended this respect in just proportion to all those Religious whose rank was above his own—even to simple Novices; and he would never permit the latter to give him the right hand or the first place, an honour they wished often to confer on him, particularly in his old age. The surest means of throwing him into the deepest confusion was to tell him the esteem which his virtue inspired. One day, when he accompanied one of the Fathers of the College to a sick person, the servants of the house conjured him to obtain by his prayers the recovery of their master. This request so confounded Alphonsus that his countenance immediately indicated the great annoyance he felt on the occasion, which, when the servants perceived, they at once apologized to him for what they had done. This only increased the humble Brother's mortification, and he gave them to understand that it was not to a contemptible creature like him that they should think of making excuses for whatever pain they might have caused him.

His mortification was not less remarkable than his humility. He fasted with the strictest rigour on the eves of the festivals of the Blessed Virgin, and of all

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the solemnities of the Church. In the most intense cold he never covered his hands, though he suffered from it exceedingly, and never lessened his clothing in summer, during which, in the southern countries, the heat is almost intolerable. When he was in the enjoyment of health he was in the habit of performing nearly every day some particular austerity; and, in his extreme old age, he sometimes obtained from his Superiors permission, through earnest solicitations, to descend to the refectory, though he could with great difficulty drag himself there, to kiss the feet of his brethren; and the devotion which animated him during this act of humility was such as to draw tears from the eyes of all present.

The regularity and exactness of Alphonsus to every point of rule was so admirable, and extended so minutely through the detail of all his actions, that it was usually said in the College "that if the regulations of St. Ignatius should chance to be lost, they would be exemplified in the conduct of Alphonsus;" and, to give an idea of his punctuality, it suffices to say that during the last years of his life, when he could only walk slowly and with great difficulty, he left his chamber a quarter of an hour previous to the signal for each exercise, in order to be present in time with the others.

Our holy Brother was most remarkable for his prompt and blind obedience, without which no religious structure could be raised; and this was particularly to be observed in him regarding his spiritual

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affairs. One of his Superiors deprived him of two communions which he had been permitted to make during the week, and limited him to that of every Sunday; the humble Brother submitted without saying a word, however sensibly he felt the sacrifice. God, however, indemnified His servant in this respect by bestowing on him a wonderful facility for spiritual communion. Another Superior ordered him, during a retreat, to confine himself in prayer to the subjects given to the rest of the Community. Alphonsus, then elevated to the sublimest degree of contemplation, followed with simplicity the path traced out to him, though he was obliged to do great violence to himself in order to apply his mind to the points prepared for meditation.

His intimate communications with God in prayer produced the most astonishing effects on his body. Several students of the College asserted that they had many times seen the saint raised many feet from the ground whilst he prayed. Bernard Marin, a servant in the College—an upright, sensible, and very holy man—stated that he one day beheld the blessed Brother before an image of our Redeemer; his face appeared very much inflamed, which struck him with a holy awe, two rays darted from his eyes. He added, that the brightness became more vivid each time he gave vent to his fervour by aspirations or sighs. One of his Superiors deposed on oath that the discourses of the holy Brother, when speaking of the love of God, were so animated that they inflamed

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the coldest and most indifferent hearts. "I can attest," says he, "that no spiritnal book ever inspired me with so much devotion as the conversations of Alphonsus; and I never remember to have recommended myself to his prayers without experiencing extraordinary consolations. He sometimes told me, when giving an account of his interior, that his love for God was such as to suffice to cause his death without a particular assistance from Heaven."

Though he honoured all the Saints with great fervour, there were some towards whom he entertained more special devotion. In the first place, St. Francis of Assisi, whom he always looked upon as his protector, and invoked with more confidence, as, like him, he had quitted commerce to enter religion. He also was devoted to St. Ildephonsus, whose name he had received in baptism. Towards our holy Father St. Ignatius he had a very special veneration; was a great admirer of his virtues, a zealous imitator of his sanctity, and an accurate observer of his holy Institute. Hence that wonderful and holy blind obedience of which we have spoken, and his continual eloquent and instructive praises on the merits of the Saint, for he often spoke of his virtues with the most profound respect. He was frequently ordered, during the Octave of the Feast of this great Saint, to entertain the Religious in the refectory on this subject, and he usually transported the brethren with the fervour and zeal with

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which he pronounced the eulogium of the Founder of the Society; but he went beyond himself when he chose as the matter of his discourse the mortification, obedience, or charity of this holy patriarch. To excite himself continually to imitate his example he represented himself, as it were, by his side, animating him to walk courageously in the way of perfection, and in the service of Jesus and Mary. He left these words in writing, as if of another: "Christ, with His Holy Mother and our blessed Father St. Ignatius, visited him;" and in another place: "St. Ignatius, with numerous Angels, attended Jesus and Mary when they appeared to him." The love he felt for St. Ignatius extended to his Society; he regarded his having been received into it as an inestimable benefit of Divine Providence. He renewed his vows every day at the Elevation of the Mass. So great was his esteem of the Society, and so dear was it to him, that from this arose his anxiety and dread for several years, lest on account of his defects he should be dismissed from it. And though he always kept his interior sensations and troubles in complete subjection, yet, when he examined with what feelings he should bear his dismissal, he never could reconcile himself to it; it was an event and privation of which he could not bear the idea, for he was too enlightened by heavenly illustrations not to know how dear and precious the Society was before God. He compared it to the sun, spreading and imparting life and joy wherever it darted its rays. So the Society, he said,

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by its doctrine, example, and labours comprehended, enlightened, and inflamed the world. This comparison, he declared, he had received in a divine revelation. Once he examined himself upon what was the greatest sacrifice that God could require of him, and he found that it would be to permit that he should be sent away from the Society. He took three days to resign himself to this event, in the supposition that God would ordain it. God was afterwards pleased to assure him by revelation that this should never happen.

The inquiry concerning the virtues of our saint was interrupted in 1631 by a decree of the Apostolic See, which ordained that fifty years should elapse after the decease of those whose Beatification was in process before proceeding to the examination of their virtues and miracles. The trial was resumed with the usual formalities, in virtue of a decree of His Holiness Pope Innocent XI., on December 18, 1684, and continued pending until the Pontificate of Benedict XIV. After the examination of the writings of Blessed Alphonsus, and the different facts of the process, there was held in 1757 the preparatory Congregation, which was followed by the General Congregation, assembled through the ministry and under the inspection of Pope Clement XIII., on April 15, 1760. On Whit Sunday, which fell on the 20th of May in the same year, this illustrious Pontiff issued the decree which declared the virtues of Alphonsus Rodriguez to be heroic.

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The question of miracles began to be discussed in 1767, and the following facts were attested, which, combined with those already alluded to, will not fail to manifest in a high degree how it pleased God to glorify His servant here below, and how powerful is his intercession before the throne of mercy.

A very aged woman, the mother of two pious daughters, had altogether neglected the care of her salvation. The effort made by several religious persons and ecclesiastics to bring her to a sense of her duty towards God and herself were wholly ineffectual. Her daughters, deeply afflicted by her hardness of heart, had recourse to supernatural means, and made a novena at the tomb of the Blessed Alphonsus to obtain the salvation of a soul so dear to them. The fervour of their prayers rent the heavens, and he in whom they confided was not deaf to their petitions. On their return to their house they were surprised and amply consoled to find their mother completely changed, and to hear her demand a Father from the College to hear her confession. This sudden conversion was universally attributed to Blessed Alphonsus.

To spare the reader repetitions and tediousness, I omit a great number of facts the miraculous nature of which cannot be doubted, and shall be contented by observing that in the course of one year more than one hundred cures were effected by the relics of the Blessed Brother, or by the flowers which had been deposited on his tomb. It was observed that

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several of these favours had been accorded to women labouring in the pains of childbirth. It is, moreover, related that the devils publicly confessed when leaving the bodies of those they possessed, that they were driven away by the virtues of the holy Brother who died lately in the island of Majorca. Another extraordinary circumstance was, that those who washed the linen which Alphonsus made use of remarked that it exhaled a most sweet perfume; and that for three years the things which had belonged to him were known by the agreeable scent they diffused.

The decree approving the miracles worked through the intercession of Blessed Alphonsus was not given until the year 1824. The process having been interrupted by the troubles of the times, it was resumed June 10, 1823, under the Pontificate of His Holiness Pius VII. His successor to the tiara, Leo XII., having repaired on July 31st, 1824, the Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, to the church of the Jesuits, assisted at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which was celebrated at the principal altar, dedicated to the holy patriarch. Having then sent for his Eminence Cardinal Somaglia, Dean of the Sacred College, the reporter of the case, the Rev. Father Virgile Pesectetti, Head of the Propagation of the Faith, and the Secretary of the Congregation of Rites, he declared in their presence that he was convinced of the truth of two miracles wrought by the Venerable Brother Alphonsus Rodriguez; the first

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of which was the cure of Antonina Blanquez, already given; and the second, the prompt and miraculous delivery of Margaret Compagn of a child. After which the Holy Father commanded that the decree should be set in order and published, in the form that has just been stated, and under the same date. It remained still that he should pronounce that the Beatification of the venerable servant of God, Alphonsus Rodriguez, could be securely proceeded with.

This third decree was given on the 29th of September, 1824, the Feast of the Archangel St. Michael. At length the solemn ceremony of the Beatification was fixed for the 12th of June, 1825. The day fell on the third Sunday after Pentecost. The vast Basilica of St. Peter's of the Vatican had been decorated with as much pomp as taste. On the portals was placed a picture representing the ineffable grace which the blessed Brother received from the most august Mother of our Redeemer, when that great Queen of Heaven, in a miraculous vision, deigned to wipe the face of her servant with her hand, when it was wet with heat. On the interior of the church, medallions and inscriptions recalled the principal events of the life of the Blessed Alphonsus, or miracles operated through his intercession. In the morning, the Cardinals, Prelates, and Assembly of the Congregation of Rites repaired to the tribune, where Father Zauli, of the Society of Jesus, Theologian of the Penitentiary, and Postulator of the Cause,

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delivered a Latin discourse, which was followed by the lecture of the Brief of the Beatification. Then the image of the newly beatified was uncovered, and the cannon of the Castle of S. Angelo having given the signal, all the bells of the city were rung whilst the *Te Deum* was chanted. Mgr. Filonardi, Archbishop of Athens, recited afterwards the prayer appropriated to the beatified, and officiated at the solemn High Mass. In the evening, the Holy Father came to the Church of the Vatican, assisted by seventeen Cardinals and Prelates of the Chamber. After having made their devotions before the altars of the Blessed Sacrament and of the Blessed Virgin, the Sovereign Pontiff went to venerate the picture of the Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez, and afterwards admitted the Very Reverend Father Fortis, General of the Society of Jesus, and Father Zauli, who had the honour of presenting to His Holiness a copy of the life of the Christian hero. The day was remarkable for the concourse and piety of the Faithful, and in the evening a brilliant illumination decorated the portico of the church of the Jesuits.

This ceremony was immediately repeated in all the churches authorized by the Holy See, and especially at Rome, Majorca, and Segovia. France was not backward in the honours offered to the venerable Brother, and with the permission of the Ordinaries, his Beatification was celebrated in several dioceses. These public testimonies of veneration, in making

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known Alphonsus to the Faithful, have given them in him a new protector, and have become the occasion of several prodigies.

The festival of the Beatification of Alphonsus was celebrated in the little Seminary of St. Louis, at Aix, on the 16th of January, 1826. There was in this establishment a Priest about the age of thirty, who had been thirteen months in a very lamentable state of health, and reduced to death's door by consumption. After having been under the care of several physicians, they at length pronounced his case incurable by all the powers of their art. The Superior of the house, seeing that all human remedies were useless, conceived a great confidence that God had reserved to the newly beatified the glory of so difficult a case. He therefore communicated his sentiments to the dying man, who, without hesitation, made a vow to the blessed Brother, received one of his relics, and from that moment was the object of his particular veneration. He at once felt, as it were, an interior assurance, which was a pledge of the favour so ardently solicited. The same night he slept for some hours, and on awaking called the Superior, who never quitted his room, and exclaimed, "I am cured!" In the morning he was able to dress himself, and to go to the church to celebrate Mass.

The devotion to Blessed Alphonsus was solemnly established in the city of Saval, and since his image has been exposed to the veneration of the Faithful,

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wax lights are brought from all parts to be burnt in his honour. Several miracles were wrought there through his intercession, and have singularly contributed to spread the devotion to the holy Brother. We will only cite two facts of incontestible authenticity.

In 1826, the festival of the Blessed Alphonsus was celebrated for the first time in the church of the Missioners of Saval, which festival is fixed by the Holy See for the 30th of October. By the permission of the Ordinary, a large picture of Alphonsus on his knees before the Blessed Virgin was then blessed and hung in a conspicuous place. The panegyric was pronounced by the Priest who was miraculously cured at Aix some months before. John Hame, a weaver, whose complete deafness had been notorious to every one in the neighbourhood for the space of fourteen years, was present at the ceremony. Not being able to hear the preacher, and struck with the confidence which was visible in every one who crowded round the picture of the saint, he felt interiorly animated to recommend himself to the newly beatified. He instantaneously obtained his cure. He published everywhere, to the glory of Alphonsus, what had happened to him. Nine occular witnesses, without counting the man and his wife, attested this prodigy in writing.

Sister Luke, a Religious of the Order of St. Charles at Lyons, attacked by paralysis of the lower extremities, for a long time could not move, so that she

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was obliged to remain continually in bed, whilst three physicians despaired of her cure. In 1826, the invalid made a private novena to the Blessed Alphonsus, but without any effect. Having related the circumstance to her Superioress, she obtained permission to make the novena for the second time. During the course of this one, she expressed an ardent desire to go with the Community to the choir to join in the prayer, and her faith and confidence seemed to animate all. They carried her there in an arm-chair. On her first effort to rise she found it useless, but, her confidence not failing, she tried again, and found herself so completely cured that she was able to advance further in, where she cast herself on her knees, made an act of thanksgiving, and then went through the house to proclaim the wonders that had been wrought in her favour. The physicians, seeing that this was a radical cure, exclaimed that Prince Hohenlohe had been written to, and had ordered a novena. They assured them to the contrary, and begged them to believe that this miracle was performed through the powerful intercession of the Blessed Alphonsus.

We could cite several other miraculous facts, but those we have related will be sufficient to excite the confidence and devotion of the Faithful to a holy Religious, whose virtues and edifying life we have endeavoured to depict. May the reading of this work, dedicated in gratitude to the Blessed Alphonsus, serve to animate the readers to zeal for their per-

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fection; may it contribute to the glory of God, the honour of the ever Blessed Virgin, and to diffuse the devotion to him whom Heaven seems to take pleasure in glorifying before men, and thereby to verify in his person the words of our Divine Saviour — "He who humbles himself shall be exalted."*

The following is a copy of the brief of His Holiness Pope Leo XII. for the beatification of the Blessed Brother Alphonsus—

"Of all the lessons of virtue left us by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ whilst on earth, His truly incomprehensible humility and obedience, of which He was the Author and Teacher, are particularly commended by the Apostle. With these eminent virtues He combated and conquered the enemy of mankind, destroyed his kingdom, and established a new one for Himself, which should extend to the furthest regions of the earth, and be composed of all tongues and nations. Whoever, therefore, are desirous of being enrolled in His service, and of emulating more precious gifts, must assiduously exercise themselves in a total self-abnegation and contempt of all earthly things, that of them it may be truly said, they have by their humility attained to the Kingdom the Father had promised to give. The heavenly Husbandman Who planted His vineyard, watered it, and gave it the increase, example, and reward of true

* St. Matt. xiii. 12.

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humility, allows no time to pass by without proposing to those who labour in this vineyard, as well as to His flock in general, new examples of virtue, which are so many excitements to imitate them to the best of our power; for the Lord knows our frame, and in what manner we can walk more promptly and expeditiously in the path of truth and salvation. When, therefore, the terrestrial Jerusalem, as yet militant upon earth, the never ceasing rival and companion of the heavenly one, beholds the fame of certain servants of Christ who have departed this life, after having conquered the flesh, together with the world and the old serpent, fame that is spread far and wide, and made illustrious by the brilliancy of their virtues, by the marvels of their lives, she permits, promotes, and enjoins their veneration and honour in various ways. We thank God for their renown and victories, and by the renewal of their memory, we excite ourselves, invoking the help of the same God, to imitate them in gaining similar victories and crowns.

"Among so many models, Venerable Alphonsus Rodriguez unquestionably holds at present a distinguished place, whose eminent virtues have not only been duly approved, but have also been confirmed by miracles.

"Born at Segovia of a respectable family, on the Feast of St. James the Apostle, the Patron of Spain, in the year 1531, whilst still in his childhood, so ardent was his love and devotion to the Virgin

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Mother of God, particularly on account of her Immaculate Conception, that he would frequently kiss her images with the greatest tenderness, and earnestly implore her protection. Nor did the Blessed Virgin allow these marks of love and affection to be deprived of their fruit; for as soon as he had lost his wife and children, he immediately despised the charms of the world, and bidding farewell to his mercantile business, he devoted himself entirely to the contemplation of heavenly things, and to other works of piety, until at length he conceived the design of repairing to Valencia for the purpose of entering some Religious Order. Hence it happened that by the advice of his spiritual director, and from a vision he had in his sleep, he enrolled himself in the Society of Jesus, the 31st of January, 1571, in the fortieth year of his age. He there gave so many proofs of his profound humility and extraordinary obedience, that on the 5th of April, 1573, he took the first vows after the noviceship, and in the year 1585, on the same day and in the same month, he solemnly pronounced the same simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

"Alphonsus, having thus entered upon this course of Religious life, ever bent his mind towards the acquisition of still greater perfection; and so humble were the sentiments he entertained of himself, that he freely and joyfully performed every low and abject office, and was particularly attached to that of porter,

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which he filled during the greatest part of his life. He did not less excel in the virtue of obedience; divesting himself of his own will, he considered it unlawful for him to do or say anything without the consent of his Superior. He observed even the smallest rules in the strictest manner; he had an utter contempt for the world, and an implacable hatred against himself. So ardent, in a word, was his love of God, that he tortured his body and brought it under subjection by fasting, hairshirts, severe disciplines, and every sort of austerity. At length, having passed his eighty-sixth year, after a most rude warfare, which he had long and often to sustain against the reprobate angels, even in visible forms, he exchanged his glorious life for a death precious in the sight of our Lord.

"The renown of his many virtues being spread far and wide, the affair was brought before the Congregation of our venerable Brethren the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, who preside over the Sacred Rites, in order that, according to the discipline of the Roman Church, the usual cognizance might be taken of the virtues proposed to be examined, and when they had been accurately discussed and weighed, Pope Clement XIII., our predecessor of happy memory, the 22nd of April, 1760, by his decree approved of them, and pronounced them to be ranked in an eminent degree. Wherefore we have thought it good that two of the miracles proposed for discussion should be proved before Us, Who have been called,

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notwithstanding our inadequate merits, by the inscrutable design of Divine Providence, to rule His whole Church, by the unanimous votes and decisions of our Consultors and venerable Brethren the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, who preside over the aforementioned Congregations, and it has been our will to issue and promulgate a decree relatively to the same, the 31st of July, 1824, after we had visited the principal church of the Society of Jesus, and there, prostrate before the tomb of St. Ignatius, frequented by great multitudes of people, we had assisted at the Holy Sacrifice. We accordingly fixed upon that day, in order that it might make manifest, by new and wonderful proofs, how the sanctity of the family of Ignatius, founded and restored for the glory of God, the good of the Church, the propagation and defence of the Faith, the education of Christian youth, and the restoration of piety, daily increases in its members.

"Wherefore, favourably yielding to the entreaties of the whole Society of Jesus, to which formerly the entire diocese of Majorca, and personages elsewhere of high rank and distinguished piety, united their interest and petitions, with the advice and consent of the Cardinals of the same Congregation, by tenor of these presents, We grant and graciously allow, by Apostolical authority, that the same servant of God. Alphonsus Rodriguez, be in future styled Blessed, that his body and relics be proposed to the veneration of the Faithful (not, however, in supplications which

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are made in processions of sacred relics), that his images be adorned with rays of glory, in fine, that an Office and Sacrifice be performed, with the prayers approved of by Us, conformably to the Roman Rubrics of the Common of a Confessor, not Bishop, on the 30th of October, as well in the diocese of Segovia, in the territory of which he was born, and in the diocese of Majorca, where he closed his last days, as in the whole Society of Jesus.

"Moreover, We are graciously pleased to grant, that in the first year after the date of these letters, but, in the West Indies, within the course of the year beginning from the day that Our Letter arrive thither, the solemn service of the Beatification of the servant of God, Alphonsus, be celebrated in the churches of the dioceses, and of the Society as above mentioned, with the Office and Mass of a Greater Double. This We enjoin to be done on the day to be appointed by the Ordinaries the Sacred Prelates, and after these solemn rites shall have been performed in our churches of the Vatican: for which sacred ceremony and pomp We have fixed on the 12th of June this year. It is Our will that copies of these letters be granted, provided they be signed by the hand of the Secretary of the aforesaid Congregation, and stamped by the seal of the Prefect; that credit be given to the same in all judicial contests, as would be given to the signification of Our will on the showing of these letters.

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"Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, under the ring of the Fisherman, the 20th of the month of May, 1825, in the second year of our Pontificate.

"In place of Francis Capaccini,

"CARD. ALBANI."*

* The late Fr. Glover, then Assistant and Secretary at the Gesù, Rome, writing home, says, "On the beatification of the Blessed Alphonsus above a ton weight of wax was employed, and above eleven hundred candles lighted, the smallest of which weighed a pound and a half. Others weighed eight or ten pounds. The candle ends are the perquisites of the Canons. Every Canon received a copy of the Life, bound in green morocco; every Cardinal a like one in red morocco; chaplains, &c., a Life in calf; and down to the stable boys in the Pope's service. Above two thousand copies were distributed, besides innumerable copper plates of various descriptions, a fine silver chalice to the Prelate who said Mass, and a magnificent picture to be presented to the Pope."

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LITANY

In honour of Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez.

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, hear us.
Christ, graciously hear us.
Holy Mary, Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God
Holy Father, St. Ignatius
Blessed Alphonsus
Blessed Alphonsus, whose blind obedience recounts victories
Blessed Alphonsus, according to the Heart of God
Blessed Alphonsus, intimately united to Jesus.
Blessed Alphonsus, faithful imitator of the virtues of Jesus
Blessed Alphonsus, fervent adorer of Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.
Blessed Alphonsus, beloved child of Mary
Blessed Alphonsus, devoted servant of Mary
Blessed Alphonsus, enemy of the pleasures of the world

Pray for us.

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Blessed Alphonsus, whose wisdom was evinced by embracing the divine folly of the Cross
Blessed Alphonsus, great by the sacrifice of thy will
Blessed Alphonsus, rich by the mortification of thy desires
Blessed Alphonsus, lover of poverty
Blessed Alphonsus, prodigy of charity
Blessed Alphonsus, model of humility
Blessed Alphonsus, admirable for thy spirit of abjection
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Pray for us.

O Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world! *Spare us, O Lord.*

O Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world! *Graciously hear us, O Lord.*

O Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world! *Have mercy on us, O Lord.*

Prayer.

O God! Who art the strength of the weak, and the exalter of the humble, Who didst deign to render Blessed Alphonsus illustrious by the continual exercise of mortification and profound humility, grant that,

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after having mortified our flesh, and persevered in the practice of humility, by following Thee in the high road of the Cross, we may obtain eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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"Tale is well told, and many of the incidents, especially the burning of the chapel with the priest and congregation by the Cromwellian soldiers, are intensely interesting."—*Universe.*

"By a writer well known, whose reputation will certainly not suffer by her new production."—*Month.*

Marie; or, the Workwoman of Liège. By CECILIA CADDELL. Cloth, 3s. 6d.

"This is another of those valuable works like that of 'Marie Eustelle Harpain.' Time would fail us were we to enumerate

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either her marvellous acts of charity, or the heroic sufferings she endured for the sake of others, or the wonderful revelations with which her faith and charity were rewarded."—*Tablet.*

"The author of 'Wild Times,' and other favourite works, is to be congratulated on the issue of a volume which is of more service than any book of fiction, however stirring. It is a beautiful work—beautiful in its theme and in its execution."—*Weekly Register.*

"Miss Caddell has given us a very interesting biography of 'Marie Sellier, the Workwoman of Liège,' known in the 17th century as 'Sœur Marie Albert.' Examples such as that so gracefully set forth in this volume are much needed among us."—*Month.*

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"The tale is well written, and the translation seems cleverly done."—*Month.*

"This volume is prettily got up, and we can strongly recommend it to all as an excellent and instructive little book to place in the hands of the young."—*Westminster Gazette.*

"An excellent translation, and a very pretty tale, well told."—*Catholic Opinion.*

"This is a pretty tale of a Puritan conversion in the time of Charles II., prettily got up, and a pleasing addition to our lending-libraries."—*Tablet.*

"This tale belongs to a class of which we have had to thank Messrs. Burns for many beautiful specimens. Such books, while they are delightful reading to us who are happily Catholics, have another important merit—they set forth the claims of Catholicism, and must do a vast deal of good among Protestants who casually meet with and peruse them. The book before us is beautifully got up, and would be an ornament to any table."—*Weekly Register.*

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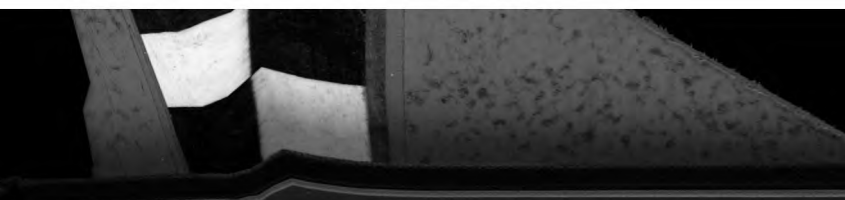
More than Conqueror

OR

THE LIFE OF JOHN WOOLFORD

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"MORE THAN CONQUEROR,"

OR,

THE LIFE OF JOHN WOOLFORD,

TELEGRAPH INSPECTOR,

AND SECRETARY OF THE SHREWSBURY BRANCH OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

TOGETHER WITH SOME SKETCHES OF HIS ADDRESSES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"HASTE TO THE RESCUE," "ANNALS OF THE RESCUED," ETC.



LONDON:

JAMES NISBET AND CO., 21, BERNERS ST., W.

1873.

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JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS

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O God, for Christ's sake,

Give the Holy Spirit,

That this Book may be profitable to all

who read it;

And advance Thy glory,

and the

Salvation of Sinners!

Amen.

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"MORE THAN CONQUEROR."

CHAPTER I.

"I love them that love Me, and they that seek Me early shall find Me."

JOHN WOOLFORD was born at Rodbourne Cheney, on January 11th, 1833. His parents were members of the Church of England, and devout Christians. His early training must have been in accordance with the principles of religion.

No traditions of his boyhood are left to us. The first record we have of him is from a letter found amongst his papers, dated July 29th, 1853, written when John was twenty years of age, by his pastor, the Rev. Richard W. Dartnell, Vicar of Rodbourne Cheney, Swindon, in which he says:

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"I have much pleasure in bearing testin
the steady, industrious character of John
ford. He has always, since I have know
conducted himself in a manner highly cr
to him, and for some time has gratuito
sisted me as a Sunday-school teacher unti
my parish."

No doubt this letter was given to Mr V
as a testimonial upon his leaving that ne
hood for Leamington, where he then went
and continued until he came to Shrewsbu
ing his residence there, we find him empl
leisure time in Sunday-school teaching,
ing the homes of the poor, especially v
were sick, or under sorrow or bereaveme

Yet with all this natural kindness of a
generous heart, and whilst leading a lif
irreproachable and indeed exemplary, Jo
ford was led by the Spirit of God at th
see his need of a change greater tha
power can accomplish, and the nece

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righteousness which could bear the scrutiny of a Holy God, a righteousness in which there was no flaw. This desire and thirst unsettled his mind for a while, until God, who created that thirst and awakened that desire, led him to Jesus, and he could say,

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink, and live.'
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him."

The word of God became now his delight. He meditated with much prayer on the daily portions of Scripture, and peace and joy abounded, as he

. . . . "saw the blood,
And looked at Him who shed it;
His right to peace was seen at once,
And he with transport read it.
He found himself to God brought nigh,
And 'Victory!' became his cry."

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It was in July, 1854, that he married, and he at once began family prayer.

Within eighteen months afterwards he removed to Shrewsbury. Two remarkable facts, showing the strength of his religious principles, might be mentioned here:

First, he made a rule never to work on Sundays. When engaged by the Telegraph Company, he said firmly, "I will do seven days' work in the six days whenever it is necessary, but I must have from twelve o'clock on Saturday night to twelve o'clock on Sunday night;" and he kept to this, and thus always had an unbroken Lord's day, and most blessed was the way in which those hours were spent.

Secondly, he resolved, by the help of God, to lay by a tenth of his wages as God prospered him, on the first day of every week; and by this habit, kept through life, he had always money for those in need, and had the joy of helping the Lord's work heartily and liberally at all seasons.

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CHAPTER II.

". . . . Ah! The Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That they who meet it unaware
Can *never rest* on earth again."

IT is written "and they *rest not* day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." O blessed unrest! that never wearies or flags in loving daily service, and in true heart worship. O Christ-like pity! which sees "the multitudes, and is moved with compassion on them, because they faint and are scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd," Matt. ix. 36.

O holy zeal of a newly-found and blood-washed sinner, who *having tasted* that the Lord is gracious, and *being satisfied*, cannot rest whilst the Saviour's words are ringing in the ears of the Church,

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"The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth [*thrust out*] labourers into His harvest."

Such was John Woolford; and from the depths of a broken and contrite, yet *consecrated* heart, a heart that had once felt the bitterness of having been lost, the cry went forth to the Great Master, "Here am I, send me."

He had no sooner settled in Shrewsbury, in St Michael's parish, than he was to be found at Church, and in the Sunday-school; and under the authority of the earnest and hard-working clergyman, the Rev. R. G. Young, he sought and found congenial employment amongst the poor in the district. We need not add that all was done gratuitously. It will never be known until the great Day reveals it, what the results of his loving work are.

His health was far from satisfactory at this time, and he became an out-patient at the Infirmary in

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1857, there being a tendency to consumption.

Shortly after coming to Shrewsbury, an honorary member of the Young Men's Christian Association, who also taught in St Michael's Sunday-school, invited him to attend one of the meetings. He thankfully availed himself of the privilege of becoming a member, joined the Bible-classes and meetings for prayer, and from henceforth the life and history of John Woolford was bound up with the life and history of that Association.

His deep and thorough study of Scripture qualified him specially for instructing others; and by the early habit of prayerful meditation on his own daily portion, he was ever ready to bring out of the treasures of a renewed mind things new and old.

Testimonies abound to his usefulness in bringing sinners to Christ, some of the meetings being open to any who were not members.

The enclosed letter from a young man who was

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on a visit to Shrewsbury will furnish an example of this.

"DEAR SIR,

Please pardon me for writing this, for I am quite a stranger to you, and only know you from hearing your Sunday evening addresses at the Young Men's Christian Association. I was there last Sunday, and your *earnest prayers* for those who are seeking Christ, the anxious, and those who are longing to know Him and to have *that* peace which it is so desirable to obtain, have led me to seek your help. I do want to know Christ as *my* Saviour, and to realize a personal interest in Him. I feel that I am entirely without either, and feel myself to be in the stronghold of unbelief. No one knows how troubled and anxious I am at times, knowing what must be my portion if I reject Christ; and yet I seem quite unable to accept Him and His Salvation. I am sure I ought not to remain in this uncertain state. I

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have not put my address, because I am on a visit to a relative. Will you kindly leave a note for me at the Institution, telling me at what time you can see me alone on Wednesday. My home is in London. O how happy I should be if I could return home with the aching void within satisfied with 'Jesus only.' God grant that it may be so.

"I remain,

"Yours truly,

"____"

Want of space forbids the insertion of more than one extract of a letter, dated Dec. 1, 1872, from a member of the Association who had left Shrewsbury.

"It is now seven minutes to four. I fancy I can see you at your desk, trying to impart those blessed truths contained in the Bible to those that have met together around you this day; I should much like to be present with you myself, for I

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must own that my deepest impressions were made in the Association, and by you, which will ever endear your name to my memory. And I hope it will please God to spare you, and give you health and strength for many years yet, to be a guide to those who are walking in the dark, and in ignorance of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My Sundays are not now as they were at Shrewsbury; as yet I have not got anything to do on the Lord's day. You will say that is my own fault; it is not because there is nothing to do; which I know is true. But then, my dear friend, I am not such a bold servant of our Lord as you are. I keep purposing to introduce myself, and then from some cause or other I keep back."

Should this letter be recognized by him who wrote it, we would affectionately and earnestly call his attention to two thoughts, which the closing lines suggest: First, it was not natural boldness which gave John Woolford such holy courage

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and zeal for Christ; it was rather the earnest yearning after perishing souls, and an unutterable sense of the preciousness of Christ. Thus, the Holy Spirit gave the impulse and the power. Secondly, it was not with him a "purposing to *introduce himself*," or he would have doubtless been as vacillating and fruitless in action as his young friend confesses to have been. The risen life of the Lord Jesus was energizing in His servant, and the instinct of that Life led him to exhibit Christ, and to introduce "Jesus only," forgetful of self and every other thing.

When the house on College Hill was first taken by the Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association, Mr and Mrs Woolford were selected to live in it, and from that time it became a resort of the members at all times when he was to be found, and his interest in them individually knew no bounds. Though so young himself, he was as a father in the wisdom of his counsels, and as a brother in the cheerful brightness of his life

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amongst them. Those who were present at their social meetings and tea-parties will never forget the genial flow of spirits, which carried him through all he did and said, making him the soul of the party. He was particularly happy in speaking at any of the meetings of the Association; no unkind words ever fell from his lips at any time, and if grieved by the inconsistency of any person connected with them, he would deal with that one in the truest love. We remember the joy and gladness with which he always welcomed the presence of their beloved and revered President, Robert Stewart, Esq., and with what grateful love he regarded him for his Christian munificence in purchasing the house, which had been rented, and presenting it in a thoroughly repaired and beautiful condition to the Young Men's Christian Association.

John Woolford became the Secretary of the Association, and the leader of the Bible-classes, &c.

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Yet all the time he could spare was devoted to visiting in any part of the town where sickness or sorrow was to be found, and he managed to accept invitations wherever he could do good, as the following letter from —— —— will show.

"DEAR MR WOOLFORD,

"I write to ask you if we may look forward to have you with us again, if the Lord permit, *the last night of the year?* It was only lately I heard from G. M. that it was a remark of yours last Dec. 31st which first aroused him to seek salvation in earnest. You said some one present might have had a narrow escape in the past year, and been spared to work for God. *He* had had a VERY narrow escape, and from that moment could not rest till he had found the Lord. He is now, thank God, a great help and constant joy to me. And the Lord has restored his bodily health, and provided employment for him in a marvellous way. The amusements he

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once delighted in, he now has lost all interest in, and he is never so happy as when studying God's word, and in prayer. Pray for him, that he may be kept very low at Jesus' feet, and be made very useful.

"Yours in Christ,

"____ ____."



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CHAPTER III.

"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

WE have hitherto only presented our dear brother as a Christian worker in the vineyard, and some who knew nothing of him personally may suppose that he had all his time to himself, and could thus well afford to act as a missionary to all around, spending and being spent for Christ.

This was the very reverse of the fact. In these days of energy of life and thought, when no drone or unskilled workman has a chance in the struggle for bread, or any one who does not possess brain or muscle, John Woolford was engaged in the most thorough way in secular work, in the new form to which the exigencies of these bustling times have led. He was Inspector of the Telegraph

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for some years before the transfer of the Telegraph to the Government; and how he was pressed with work when that change had to be effected, and how the responsibility of the whole fell upon him within a large-given district (the Northern division), is known to every one here.

We look back upon the marvellous rapidity and thoroughness with which his work was done, his fidelity, punctuality, and business habits, and wonder how he ever found leisure then for religious work. He would gather together the idle, thoughtless loiterers everywhere, whenever stopping the night from home, and, Bible in hand, earnestly, affectionately, and solemnly warn, beseech, entreat them to close with the offer of salvation in Christ. With the peculiar freemasonry which God's children have in finding one another out, he was sure to search out such if any were near, and with an overflowing heart pour forth the words God gave him to speak, refreshing and strengthening their zeal and love, and

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sharpening them for the conflict with sin in every form, as it existed around them. And then in his constant journeys by railway on business, he never lost an opportunity of speaking for Christ, and many a time has he caused the tear to start in the eyes of those unused to weep, business men, commercial travellers, &c.

It is a fact that ought not to be passed over, that during the transfer of the telegraph to the Government, Mr Woolford held out firmly, as he had ever done, against working on Sundays. Fresh hands had to be engaged, and he selected trustworthy men from amongst the Christian members of St Alkmond's Total Abstinence Society; and so energetic and thorough was he in all his work, that he had completed his portion not only within the given time, but also before any other Inspector had done his! And thus he was able to recommend some of his own men to help the others in finishing their districts!

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This little account would be scarcely complete without mentioning the thorough sympathy Mr Woolford felt in any effort for bringing sinners to Christ, the Household Mission in Shrewsbury, &c., &c. His heart was in thorough unison with every one who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, by whatever name he might be called. The question with him was, Does he or she love Christ? the rest was to him of no importance. He saw the world lying in the Wicked One, and cared not whether Nonconformist or Churchman preached Christ. But there was one thing his inmost soul abhorred; he could not stand any system which dishonoured Christ, which gave an uncertain sound of the glorious Gospel, or presented anything else to the perishing sinner in the place of Christ. He could endorse St Paul's words with emphasis: "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

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His constant kindly feeling towards the work recorded in the pages of "Haste to the Rescue" was shown by his willingness, whenever able, to take the Saturday night Prayer-meeting when we were absent from home. He joined St Alkmond's Total Abstinence Society in 1860, and continued some years in our ranks, regretting very much that weakness of health hindered his remaining altogether afterwards. He gave us a beautiful Bible for the School-room meetings of our Society, in which he wrote the words, "Presented to Mrs Wightman by one of her members, 1861." And on the opening of the Working Men's Hall, a larger and handsomer volume was given for the same purpose, as the meetings were transferred thither, with the following inscription in his own handwriting:

"This copy of the Word of God was presented to Mrs Wightman by one of her members, on the occasion of the opening of the Working Men's Hall, and to be in use at the same, with fervent

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prayer that the precious Saviour revealed therein may be so lifted up as to draw many unto Him, and so shall be her crown of rejoicing in that day, when the Lord shall come to number up His Jewels." "April 7, 1863."

When our late valued friend and parish clerk, Mr Badger, was ill, Mr Woolford took his duty, keeping the Registers, &c., and upon his death my husband appointed Mr Woolford to the office. This he continued to fill until his death.

The great press of work as Inspector of the Telegraph, mentioned in this chapter, told upon Mr Woolford's health terribly. His voice failed him occasionally, and we could discern with much concern the old symptoms of weakness in the chest returning, but he was still young, and with surprising buoyancy of spirit continued all his work until March, 1872, when, to the sorrow of his fellow-secretary, Mr R., the following letter was received from Mr Woolford.

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"My dear R.,

"It is with feelings more painful than I can describe, that I am compelled to resign my post as conductor of the Bible-class on the Sunday afternoon.

"For a period of over four months I have felt my inability for that all-important part of our work. The spirit has been willing, but the flesh often weak.

"For the present, I shall be happy to arrange for all our other meetings, and to take part in them as far as my God and Father may give me strength. I most earnestly pray that the Committee may be guided by the Holy Ghost in the choice of my successor, and that a man after God's own heart may be given you in answer to much prayer. I am,

"My dear Brother,

"Yours in Christian love,

"John Woolford."

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After a meeting of the Committee, a resolution was passed, by which Mr Woolford was entreated to reconsider his resignation, and to withdraw it. And thus he continued, by the grace of God, to go on as before, with deeper blessing if possible, as the Spirit of God daily ripened him for glory.

In these days of pleasant and easy travelling and interchange of thought, it was a happy idea of the Young Men's Christian Associations to arrange that Conferences should be held at home and abroad annually for mutual encouragement and edification. Mr Woolford was generally one of the delegates from the Shrewsbury Branch, and greatly enjoyed the Conferences held in London, Edinburgh, Elberfeld, Paris (the year of the Exhibition), Bristol, and again in 1871 in London. He formed several friendships on those occasions, and ever returned with deeper feelings of regard towards Mr W. E. Shipton, Secretary of the Parent Association.

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CHAPTER IV.

"I die—the setting sun
Is sinking in the West;
My day is o'er, my work is done,
And now the time for rest.

"I die—how bright the way
While nearing thus my Home!
Lo! now I see the break of Day;
Arise, thy Light is come!

"I die—my soul I yield,
My Saviour, at Thy call;
In life, Thou wast my Sun, my Shield,
In death, my All in all!"

HOW little we thought when a pencil-note reached me on Tuesday, Dec. 10th, from John Woolford, that these were the last lines he would ever write, and that the closing scenes of his useful and loving life were already at hand. He wrote, "I do not think you know that my brother James is ill. He is living in New

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Street, Frankwell, and I should like you to come and see him. He became a member of your Society on September 17th, 1860."

Indisposition hindered my going that day, but I drove to see James the next day, in pouring rain, and was very grieved to find him not only seriously ill, but evidently dying. He had only been away from work a few days. Bronchitis had laid its grasp on a constitution that had no stamina, and it was very touching to find that his brother John, who was not fit for the fatigue, had been up with him all night; he stood beside him now, wiping the death damps from his brow, moistening his lips with a feather, and repeating texts of Scripture, as the dying man could bear. It was evident the holy words were being received with eager thankfulness. On seeing me enter the room, John looked very thankful, and James gave a look of recognition; as I drew close to him, he held out his hand, cold and clammy, and gave me a grasp. I stayed half-an-hour or more. The

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same day James passed away into the presence of Jesus.

Now came the reaction on John's over-wrought frame. He had held his brother's hand, icy cold with death, for three hours before he died, and he spoke of it afterwards to his wife several times, "My poor hand, it is Jim's hand, it smells of death—"

On the following days, Thursday and Friday, he was seen out, as usual; the arrangements for the funeral had to be made, and yet no loving visits to the sick were omitted.

On Saturday he was too ill to attend the funeral. On Sunday he was very ill, and his dearly-loved pastor, Mr Wightman, saw him.

On Monday we were all in much grief, for it was evident that his life was precarious. He himself gave up all thought of recovery and believed he would pass away before the morning.

He sent me a message by my husband, begging me to take for the Sunday-night meeting at the

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Working Men's Hall the words, "In the midst of life we are in death," coupled with "I am the Resurrection and the Life," and expressed a wish that Mr Wightman would preach from the text, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

But it was hard to believe that the valued life was so near its close.

On Tuesday morning he sent for me. I found several by his bed-side, watching him with loving interest. The radiant look of deep joy on his face solemnized our hearts. I said, "We have prayed earnestly for your recovery, dear friend, but I am afraid you will feel disappointed if our prayer is answered."

He spoke quietly and deliberately, "No, I should like to recover. I am in His hands. I leave it to be according to His will."

That expression of holy gladness was not to be

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forgotten all day, in the midst of our varied occupations.

I came again at night. There were several members of the Young Men's Christian Association standing by him, with other friends. The difficulty of breathing was greater. Bronchitis had been doing its fell work, and it was almost impossible for him to speak now. The Rev. James Colley had just been praying with him, and was leaving the room. He quietly and calmly took the fringe of the shawl that was wrapped round his shoulders as he was propped up in bed. He separated carefully one woollen thread, and held it up with his finger and thumb, whispering faintly, "Such is life—a slender thread—soon snapped."

His face beamed with gladness. His frequent upward glances of joy unutterable were more eloquent than words. I thought he had a sight given him within the veil, a glimpse of the

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Saviour's face, and asked, "Can you see Jesus?" "By faith," was the whispered reply. He put his hand out to each of us, giving a hearty grasp—and then pointed to each one as we stood round his bed, and again pointed upwards with a smile of ecstasy; and we caught the whispered words, "Soon—*all* meet there soon—very soon."

At one time his dear wife's grief could not be pent in, and she gave way for a few moments. We could none of us restrain our tears, though we kept from making the slightest sound lest it should disturb him. He noticed our tears, and taking his pocket-handkerchief into his pale hand, he wiped his own dry eyes, whispering with an upward look of heavenly joy, "God has wiped away all my tears." "Yes," said his wife; "he has not shed a tear since he was taken ill." "He says death is *only a shadow* to the believer, he has found it so," said some one standing by.

There were several young men belonging to the Association who staid all night with him, they

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could not bear to leave him, and accounted it a privilege to be with him, and in any possible way to minister to him.

When he was too weak to speak, his doctor being near his bed, John Woolford wrote in pencil, "Can this be dying? it is rather falling asleep in Jesus," and gave it into his hands. The perfect and assured peace by which God enabled His dear servant to witness to the wondrous grace that is in Christ Jesus, was indeed a testimony to the truth on which he had, through life, anchored his soul. He found "Jesus Only" a sufficient ground of hope and joy, and though, from the trying nature of his illness, his words were very, very few, the unutterable joy which lit up his face, making it wondrously beautiful, was more eloquent than the most glowing words could be.

He fell asleep in Jesus on the following day, Wednesday the 18th, at five o'clock in the evening, without any struggle; the day week that I met him at his brother's dying bed.

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The sorrow felt throughout Shrewsbury when the news of his death became known, was such as one might expect when a public loss is sustained.

One of the officers of the Salop Prison was overheard speaking of it to the Rev. James Denning, the Chaplain, by a prisoner in his cell, and when the prisoner was visited in his turn, he was found weeping bitterly. "He visited me night and day when I was ill. Oh that I had thought more of his words when he implored me so to come to Jesus. I should not be here now if I had listened, and turned."

Another man, who had been ill five months and unable to work, would not believe that John Woolford was dead. "Why, he came to visit me twice a week all through this long time, to read and pray with me. And gave me two shillings a week, and he has not missed a visit until this very week." This man has since died.

Thus faithfully had John Woolford remembered his Lord's words, "Occupy till I come."

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CHAPTER V.

"Servant of God, well done!
Rest from thy loved employ;
The battle fought, the victory won,
Enter thy Master's joy."

T was a solemn sight when we entered the Working Men's Hall after church the following Sunday night to find the room filled, at least seven hundred persons being present. It had become known that the words dear Mr Woolford had given me were to be the subject for the evening's address. Having heard during the week that the Young Men's Christian Association Room would be closed that night, I had sent a note to each member of the Association, inviting them to come, and telling them that it was our purpose to have a *prayer-meeting* instead of the usual form of meeting on that occa-

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sion; would they join us and give us their help, and ask as many young persons entering into life, as they could, to come. It was a most blessed hour. The words, "In the midst of life we are in death," coupled with "I am the Resurrection and the Life," gave the earthly and the heavenward aspect of the believer's death.

After briefly touching upon man's inheritance from the first Adam, sin, death, and the most just wrath of God; and stating that we can never be saved unless we are linked by the Holy Ghost to the last Adam, Jesus Christ, who by His most precious death not only brings redemption from sin, death, and the wrath of God, but also by virtue of His risen life energizing in the believer, newly creates him after the image of God, and makes sure to him all the promises of the "better covenant," Divine renewal, Divine relationship, Divine teaching, and Divine pardon, the subject closed with a short review of Woolford's life, he being "a living Epistle of Jesus Christ, known and

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read of all men," and an earnest appeal was made to the wavering, half-hearted, compromising, and worldly, who might be present in that throng. By the solemn stillness, broken only by half-stifled weeping, it was evident that hearts were under deep emotion. May God in His great mercy grant that it may be abiding in its effects upon some. Several members of the Young Men's Christian Association offered prayer, each marked by fervour and humility, and we sang four hymns. The closing prayer was from the Rev. G. Kettle of Swan Hill Congregational Chapel. My husband was also present.

The funeral took place on the following day at a most inconvenient hour in the morning for the attendance of men engaged in business, nevertheless upwards of a hundred followed him to the grave. Just before they started, a Roman Catholic priest, seeing the group waiting at the door of the house, asked what it meant. "What is all this great funeral? Who is going to be buried?"

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They told him "Mr Woolford." "Ah," he said, "he *was* a *good man*." A testimony like this from one whose views were so opposite, is worth something.

"Rock of Ages" was sung in the cemetery chapel, and "For ever with the Lord" at the grave, the last was hardly audible, as few could join for weeping. Amongst the mourners were Nonconformist ministers, and the honoured and revered President of the Association. John Woolford's father, who had been summoned by him to his brother James's funeral, was there also, having remained on account of the illness and death of his eldest son; and his youngest son was there, a lad of 17, who wept as if his heart would break. My husband took the funeral, and gave a touching and earnest address to the members of the Association after the service was over.

Oh, there is something inexpressibly grand and heart-stirring in our Burial Service. Whose fault is it that it should ever sound incongruous, or jar in one's ears as akin to blasphemy, when read over

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some persons? Certainly not the fault of the Church of England, but of those who have lived and died in sin, rejecting the Saviour whom it is her honour to exalt, and neglecting the Scriptures which it is her glory to proclaim in daily portions throughout the Christian year. Could there be anything more inconsistent than to desire that the high tone and standard of her worship should be lowered to suit the lives of worldly, half-hearted men; or worse still, those whose deeds are condemned alike by her voice and that of God's Holy Word? There is a sublimity in her office of burial for the dead, because it is based on truth. Truth is always invigorating. The mourner's eye is directed upwards straight to Christ, with whom the believer's life is hid in God. And, "looking unto Jesus" in His risen and glorified humanity on the throne of the Father, who is the only true ground of comfort, and who for us is emphatically "the Resurrection and the Life," even while we yet stand bowed in grief at the open grave, the triumph of that coming Day is anticipated,

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when "the dead thall be raised incorruptible"; and over-sweeping the present time of weeping, waiting, loneliness, and conflict, the heart echoes back the grand and glorious challenge of the Apostle, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

It remains now only to add a sketch of the funeral sermon preached by my dear husband, from the text John Woolford had selected. And we cannot omit one of several letters received from loving members of the Young Men's Christian Association, who having left Shrewsbury felt a comfort to their own hearts in writing a few lines of truest sympathy on the death of their beloved friend and brother. This one is written to a member of the Association, and will be read with interest.

"*Dec.* 21, 1872.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"It is with deep and heart-felt sorrow that I now answer your kind letter, in which I am

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informed of our dear departed friend's death. I assure you I feel it deeply, as I am sure all will do who knew him. To me he was more than a friend or a brother. He was my spiritual guide, who never wearied in pointing out the way of salvation, and urging an upright and conscientious walk before God. It is very hard to lose such a dear servant of our Lord Jesus from our midst. But yet it is the will of God, and we must try to submit. It is our duty to submit humbly to whatever the Lord may think good to do. At the same time nature is weak, and will hardly give way without a murmur. It is also a warning to prepare; for we know not when our call may come. Little did I think when I last saw him at the station, after having taken tea with him, yourself, and Mrs Woolford, it would be the last time I should ever see him on earth. It is a heavy blow to Mrs Woolford, but I doubt not the Lord will give her strength to bear up against it. It would be a pleasure, in fact an honour, had I the oppor-

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tunity of following him to the grave—his resting-place until that day when our Lord Jesus comes again to quicken the dead.

"Yours in Christian Unity,

"____ ____."

At a quarterly meeting of the Lilleshall Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association held at Lilleshall, Salop, on Saturday, January 13th, 1873, the following resolution was proposed by Mr J. Tomlinson, seconded by Mr J. Latham, and supported by Mr H. Richardson: "That the Committee and Members of the Lilleshall Young Men's Christian Association have heard with deep regret the loss they have sustained in the death of their friend and co-adjutor, Mr John Woolford, who rendered valuable assistance at the formation of this Branch Association, and on many subsequent occasions aiding the Committee by his counsel and long experience in the work to which he had devoted so much time

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and earnest effort, that of seeking the eternal welfare of young men's souls. This Association desires to express to the widow and friends of their departed friend their Christian sympathy, and they pray that special grace may be given them to follow in life the faith and works of him over whose loss they now mourn."

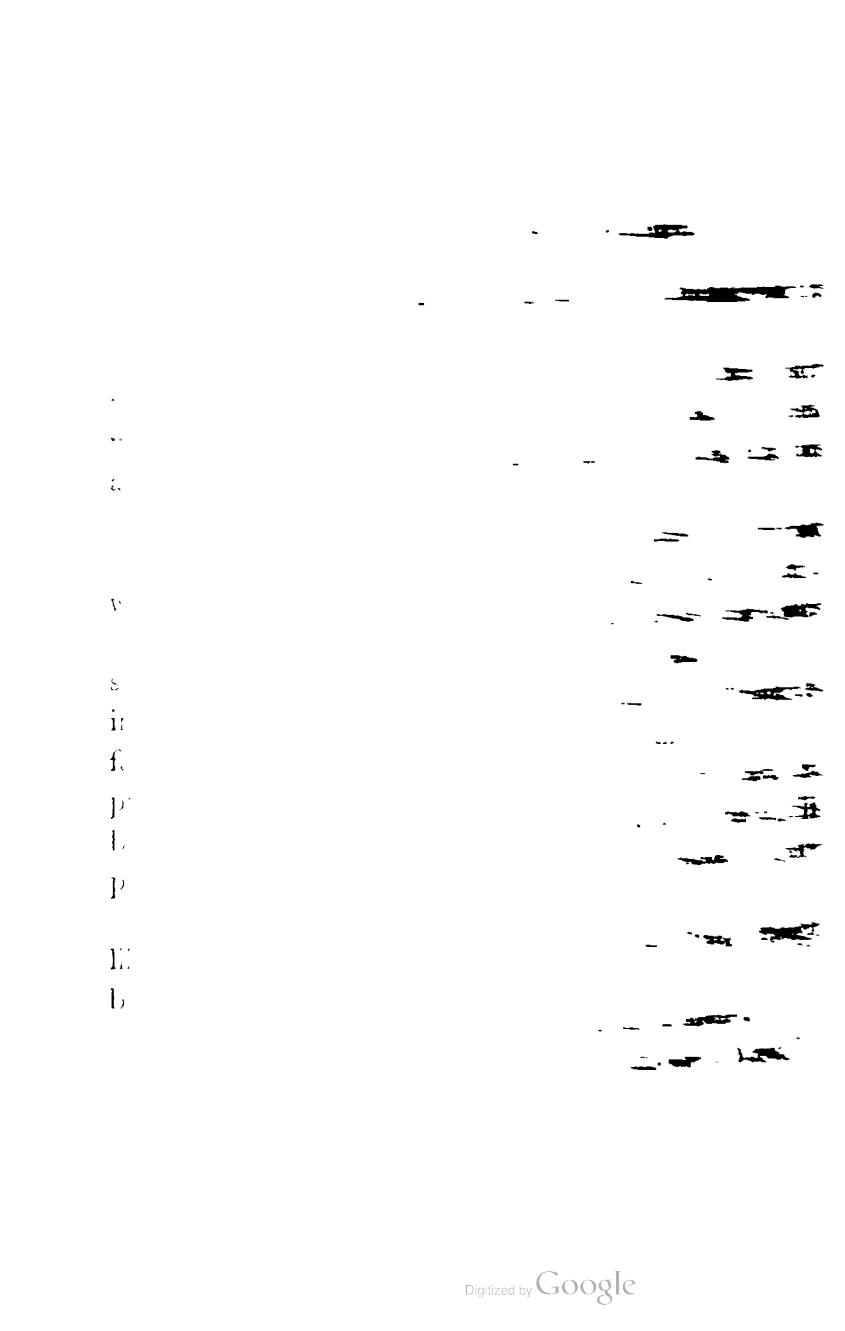
We also add an extract of a letter received from the Rev. R. Goodwin Young, late of St Michael's Vicarage, Shrewsbury, now Vicar of St Ann's, Brown Edge, Burslem.

"I need hardly say how very sorry I am to hear of the death of dear Mr Woolford, my old esteemed and faithful friend.

"It is however a great cause of thankfulness to know that as he lived so he died, leaning upon Jesus.

"I can truly say that he laboured in my late parish, St Michael's, Shrewsbury, as a faithful Sunday-school teacher for many years, and that

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During the following week I was asked to meet the mothers who attend the weekly meetings of the Household Mission, at their tea party in the mission room in a suburban district. It was touching how the name of John Woolford, mentioned as an illustration of the power of God's grace, was like a home-word that reached every heart. Women living in opposite parts of Shrewsbury spoke of him with tears, as a loving friend, ever sympathizing and true, ready to assist with timely aid in seasons of need or sorrow, and ever leading them upwards and onwards, by prayer, counsel, God's word, and his own earnest entreaties.

We bless God for having permitted us to know and love him here, and his name will ever be a bond of union between ourselves and those who have had the same privilege.

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SKETCH OF SERMON

ON THE DEATH OF JOHN WOOLFORD, PREACHED AT ST ALKMOND'S, BY THE REV. C. E. L. WIGHTMAN, DEC. 29TH.

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. ii. 10.

I. *A Warning.*
II. *A Requirement.*
III. *A Promise.*

I. *The Warning.*

These words are supposed by some to refer to the ten years' persecution under the Emperor Domitian; but they are of universal application. See Acts xiv. 22, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

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2 Tim. iii. 12, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." And how is this? Because evil men will tempt us, and if not listened to, will persecute. 1 Pet. iv. 4, "They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." And this was the reason our friend desired that these words should be brought before you this day, especially before the young men.

II. *A Requirement.*

This implies that they had believed already, not all with equal strength of faith, but most, if not all, sincerely. 1 John ii. 12—14, "Be thou faithful unto death." To whom? To Christ. Rev. i. 5, 6, to "Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." To what are we to be faithful? (1.) to the doctrine of Christ. What are we to believe? *Ruin.* Matt. xv. 19, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," &c. Rom. v. 19, "By one man's disobedience many

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were made sinners." *Redemption.* John iii. 16, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." . . *Regeneration.* John iii. 5, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." *Resurrection.* Job xix. 25, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c. Let not these be obscured, hidden, or explained away. Read the doctrinal articles of the Church of England, VI. to XVI. (2.) Be faithful to the commands of God, Matt. xxii. 37 — 40. Let none persuade you that the ten commandments are done away. Our Saviour endorsed them in Matt. v. and St Paul in Rom. xiii. What a reverence our departed brother had for the Sabbath day! On coming to Shrewsbury he told his employers that he would work for them till twelve o'clock on Saturday night, and begin again at twelve o'clock on Sunday night, if necessary, but that he could not and would not work on the Sabbath day. (3.) Be faithful to the commands of Christ, Heb. x. 25, 26.

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1 Cor. xi. 24, "Do this in remembrance of me," &c. (4.) Be faithful to the pattern of Christ. In humility, Phil. ii. 5; in love, Gal. ii. 20; in zeal, John ix. 4, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day." Look at John Woolford not considering himself fitted to deal with young men, and see what he became; remember his happy face, and look at the work that he accomplished. (5.) Be faithful to the people of Christ. They are accounted a poor, despised, mean-spirited, ignorant set, have neither riches, rank, learning, nor talent; but have they Christ? Then they have life eternal, John xvii. 3. My friends, however you may live, you would desire to die like them, Num. xxiii. 10. See how Paul could look forward to his departure, 2 Tim. iv. 6—8. Even so could our friend. (6.) Faithful to the work of Christ. Luke ix. 62, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." You have begun to attend the house of God—go on.

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Matt. xviii. 20, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Some of you have begun to teach in a Sunday-school—go on. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." You have begun to attend at the Lord's table—go on, and do this in remembrance of Him, thus showing forth His death until He come again. You have begun to attend the Young Men's Christian Association—go on; you will find there the communion of saints, and a help in the way to heaven. Is there any reason why you should leave off any of these things? Some would say, Abundance of reason. Yes, but sufficient reason? such as will stand in the great day?—go on, you know not what good you may do by example as well as by speaking of and for Jesus. Look at our brother; hardly a house in Castle-foregate or Castle-fields where he had not spoken the word with prayer, and the consequence was there was hardly a house where he was not lamented. (7.) Faithful to the voice

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of conscience. So Paul was. So John Woolford was. He began family prayer as soon as he was married, and found the benefit and the blessing of it all through life.

III. *A promise*—"I will give thee a crown of life."

It implies eternal life, John x. 27, 28. It implies eternal glory. Rev. iii. 21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne," &c. Their righteous deeds shall be rewarded and acknowledged in that day. The case of John Woolford shows the usefulness and importance of the Young Men's Christian Association. On coming to Shrewsbury he very soon joined himself to the congregation of the Rev. R. G. Young at St Michael's, and there found encouragement, help, and congenial employment, visiting the sick and poor in the parish. Then he met with the friend who is now the treasurer of the Young Men's Christian Association, and was invited by him to join it; he did so, and for the

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last 13 years his history has been the history of the Association itself. And how he grew in grace, what manner of man he was, and what good he did here and elsewhere, you know. But how he enjoyed his work, how many young men he brought to Christ, or established in the faith, we do not know; it will be known in the great day.

Well—he rests from his labours, and his works do follow him.

Do you follow him as he followed Christ.

Young men, you may choose drinking, smoking, ungodly and idle companions, or you may choose those who love the word of God and prayer. Choose you this day whom you will serve. Choose Christ for your Master and all shall be well.

Members of the Young Men's Christian Association, keep true to your principles. Let your Association be a distinctively *Christian* Association. There is your wisdom, there is your safety. When I asked our friend whether he wished the words of the text to be applied to his own case, or to that

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of the Association, he replied emphatically, "to both."

May the Lord bless you and make you a blessing in this town, and may He raise up a man to succeed our friend who shall carry out his designs for the good of the Association.



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SKETCHES OF ADDRESSES,

BY JOHN WOOLFORD.

"He, being dead, yet speaketh."

SKETCH I.

"It is finished."—John xix. 30.

THESE were our Lord's last words on the Cross.

What is finished? His own sufferings? Yes, true; but these are not referred to here. He forgot His own sufferings.

Illustration: A prince saved a boy . . . happiest moment of his life, that moment of peril to his own life.

What were finished? Types and shadows, fulfilled in Him who was the substance; the veil

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could now be rent, for access to God was opened. Finished—the terror of the law. Heb. xii. 18—29. The law fulfilled. Prophecies fulfilled. Judas, Centurion, Pilate, the thief. Finished—man's redemption, wherein "Mercy and Truth met together, Righteousness and Peace kissed each other." The demands of Divine justice were finished, Death was vanquished. "He hath abolished death." *Abolished,* can we say? Yes, it is written in the Scriptures.

But do not out friends in Christ die? Say rather, they fall asleep in Jesus. See Stephen, Acts vii. 60. Can this be dying? "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Sin being taken away, death is only a *shadow* to the believer. Jesus finished the title to heaven. Can we trust in Him alone, and in His finished work?

"What hath Jesus done for you?
What for Him will you not do?"

The application.

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SKETCH II.

"Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."—John iii. 7, 8.

I. *The Necessity.* "Ye *must.*"

II. *The Agency.* "The Spirit," using the Word.

III. *The Evidences.* "Thou hearest the sound thereof."

I. *The Necessity.* "*Verily, verily, I* say unto you." Here we have *authority* for the necessity. "*Ye must be,*" spoken by lips that could not lie. The reason is plain. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The natural man, then, can neither see, know, nor understand. The natural heart is cor-

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rupt: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." There *must* be a *change*, then, wrought by God. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

II. *The Agent who brings this change.* "The Spirit," applying the word of truth to the sinner's heart and conscience. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."—1 Pet. i. 23. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."—James i. 18. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

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—Jer. xxiii. 29. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."—Psal. xix. 7, 8. "Then *they that gladly received the word* were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."—Acts ii. 41.

The spread of ritualism and infidelity is caused by neglect of the study of God's word with prayer. We saw this in Paris.

III. *The Evidences.* These are known by their effects, like *wind:* "thou hearest the sound thereof." We can *feel* the gentlest breeze that springs up. It is an evidence of the new-born infant's life when we hear it *cry.* The renewed soul *prays.* "Behold, he prayeth," was the first evidence God gave of the work of grace begun in the heart of Saul of Tarsus. See the evidences given by the jailer at Philippi, Acts xvi. 30—34;

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the cry, "What must I do to be saved?" ended with "*rejoicing*, and believing in God with all his house." See the 3000 souls who were added to the Church in one day; they "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers." John says, "We know we have passed from death unto life, *because we love the brethren.*" Paul says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, all things are become new." "The *fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's *have* crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

Conclusion. Then, we are not born again by baptism, or repentance; we are not born again by reformation of life, nor by our prayers. But by the Holy Ghost enabling a man to receive Christ, and to yield himself to the Spirit's power and grace. "As many as received Him, to them gave He

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power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

SKETCH III.

"Jesus only."—Matt. xvii. 8.

I. "*Jesus only*" *our object of faith during life.*
II. "*Jesus only*" *is our consolation in death.*
III. "*Jesus only*" *is our adoration in glory.*

I. "*Jesus only*" *is the object of faith during life.* The law was against us, we had broken it. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," was God's decree. "Jesus only" could say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" He fulfilled the law, He magnified it. The prince of this world came and tempted Him, and had nothing in Him. Jesus atoned for our sins, Isa. liii. Paul could fearlessly

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challenge every adversary. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," Rom. viii. 34. *He* intercedes for us, "Jesus only." Neither saint, angel, nor Virgin.

II. *He is our consolation in death.* When the iron grasp of death is on a believer, see how he can act by the power of faith! Look at Stephen, Beveridge, Dr Jeune, &c. We need a Saviour. If you were to die to-night, would you awake with Jesus, or in hell?

III. "*Jesus only*" *shall be the object of our adoration in heaven.* We have all lost friends; the hope of meeting them again has always been a source of comfort. I love to think of heaven, and the re-unions and recognitions there. But I find that the one chorus of the redeemed is, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be

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glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Application. Is it "Jesus only" to you all?

SKETCH IV.

"Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And Abraham said, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."—Luke xvi. 19—31.

HERE we have a solemn warning.

What a contrast was there between the rich man and Lazarus during their life here! What a contrast in eternity!

The one fared sumptuously; was clothed in fine apparel; died; was buried with funeral pomp and ceremony. Little did they think where his poor soul was gone.

Lazarus was in destitution, diseased. Dies without pity. No mention of his burial. It was a mean funeral, but, oh! better far, angels carried his soul to heaven.

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No merit in poverty.

No guilt in wealth.

This life is not all. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth." After life is over there is happiness beyond all we can conceive; or suffering greater than anything here, "tormented in this flame,"—"thirst."

The future state is eternal. If a man be lost, there is no hope for ever. He has before him "the vengeance of eternal fire." There is no escape; "cannot pass" are the solemn words. There is no mercy, "hath never forgiveness." Ages shall pass away—unmitigated by any answer to prayer. "Send Lazarus."

"Son, *remember*." Oh, if lost, *what* terrible memories will haunt the sinner: memories of mercies, of grace offered, spurned, rejected; remembrance of sins unpardoned. God grant none of us may experience this.

The remedy is before us. "Moses and the prophets." Of whom did they testify? Of a

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greater than Lazarus. One who died for us, and has risen from the dead. What effect has this Gospel had on *your* hearts? You need a Saviour. Have you *received* Him? Do you know Him and love Him?

Or, if you were to die, would you lift up your eyes in hell?

SKETCH V.

"My people have committed two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."—Jer. ii. 13.

Two evils committed, against a loving, gracious God.

I. They have forsaken me, God, on whom every breath they drew depended, who, in His love and pity, had brought them out of Egypt, led them through the wilderness, sustaining them day by day in a land of deserts and of pits; through a

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land of drought and of the shadow of death; through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt. "And I brought you into a plentiful country to eat the fruit thereof. But when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination." They forsook me, a Friend, a Father, whose love never changed, whose providence encompassed them on every side. They forsook me, the Lord their God. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

II. "They hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Note, what *labour* it cost them. Is it not so with all who make wealth, pleasure, honour, their god? "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" These are "broken cisterns that can hold no water." There is no satisfaction to the soul. They are empty, vain, cannot profit,

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leave the soul unnourished, lost for want, famished. Surely "a deceived heart hath turned them aside." They "feed on ashes," they have not knowledge enough to say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

III. But what was God to them? the "Fountain of living waters." Fountain of life. In Him they had redemption, forgiveness, peace, cleansing, refreshment, sustenance. "I am the bread of life." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Application. Have any of us forsaken God? In what are we trusting? Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou alone art Eternal Life.

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SKETCH VI.

"Will ye also be His disciples?"—John ix. 27.

I. *The circumstances of the miracle.*
II. *The triumph of truth over error.*
III. *Are* WE *His disciples?*

I. *The circumstances of the miracle.*

A man blind from his birth. Jesus sees him. The disciples question, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" Christ's answer, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

As Christ, before the grave of Lazarus, said, "I am the resurrection and the life," so now, in the presence of this blind man, He says, "I am the light of the world." "When He had thus spoken. He spat on the ground, and made clay of the

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spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which, is by interpretation, Sent.) The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he; others said, He is like him. But he said, I am he."

The man who had been blind is questioned by many; he tells the circumstances. "A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam: and I went and washed, and I received sight." It was the sabbath day. The Pharisees cavilled, and said, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day." They disbelieve that the man ever was blind. They ask his parents, "Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?" The parents say, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind," but they decline telling *how* he received his sight, lest they should be ex-

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communicated, "for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that Jesus was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." They again cavil, and ask the man how Jesus wrought the miracle. "I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples?" as though he would say, "Are you asking for information, that you may really find out the truth, and come to Him and be His disciples, or are you asking for perverseness and cavilling?" The man spoke up earnestly for Jesus; "Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes! Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind? If this man were not of God he could do nothing."

II. *Triumph of truth over error.*

When Christ opens the blind eyes, He turns from darkness to light, from prejudices and perversity to the obedience of faith. He makes a

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persecutor ask, "Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do?" He makes a sinner give up sin, every one *his own way*. Sin separates from God. Sin dethroned angels. Sin cast man out of Paradise. Sin destroyed Sodom. Sin destroyed Jerusalem. Sin brought destruction upon Paris. When a man's eyes are opened, he loathes self, he gives up self, he begins to pray.

Blind men ask scoffingly, "Are *we* blind also?" It is only the Spirit of God that can convince the blind of their blindness; they can boast of their systematic benevolence, their ritual, their ceremonial, and they can oppose Christ. They boast of their freedom—"We are Abraham's children, and never were in bondage to any;" yet they are in slavery to Satan, who has blinded their eyes; they are in the worst kind of bondage. There is no freedom until Christ makes us free,—free from the guilt and power of sin; free to serve Him, with liberty to "enter into the holiest by a new and living way."

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This is triumph of truth over error, this is joy, this is happiness, this is sight restored, "seeing Him who is invisible." "Looking unto Jesus," this is rest, this is satisfaction.

III. *Are we His disciples?*

Let us search our own hearts. In whom is our trust? Whom are we serving? What is the ground of our hope? Is it anything we are doing? Of whom are we learning? Whom are we following? Who is our Master, our Teacher?

SKETCH VII.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."—John xiv. 6.

We are, by nature, out of the way, afar off, and cannot find our way to God. And man would not if he could, being alienated from the life of God. Jer. vi. 16, "Thus saith the Lord,

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Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." Ezek. xxii. 30, "And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land that I should not destroy it, but I found none."

I. *Christ is our way by sacrifice.* "Having therefore, brethren, boldness [liberty] to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, and having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw nigh with a true heart. . . ."

II. *He is our way by example.* "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice," John x. 4. "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ," 1 Cor. xi. 1. "Walk in love, as Christ hath loved us," Eph. v. 2. "A

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new commandment give I unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you," John xiii. 34. Also Phil. ii. 3—5; 1 Pet. ii. 21.

III. *He is our way by the Holy Ghost.* "Through Him we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

IV. *He is our only way.* "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12.

"I am the door, by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture," John x. 9.

SKETCH VIII.

"Follow me."—Luke ix. 59.

In order that Christ might be our example, a model in all the varied circumstances in which

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man might be placed, He passed through it all, so that He might be our guide and our sympathizer in all that we have to pass through.

I. *Is man tempted?* So was Jesus. "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," Heb. iv. 15, 16.

II. *Is man forsaken?* So was Jesus. "They all forsook Him and fled." "He was despised and rejected of men."

III. *Is man's home a mean cottage?* How often Jesus could say, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."

IV. *Is man called to sympathize with the afflicted?* So was Jesus. He wept at the grave of Lazarus.

V. *Is any man popular?* Who so popular as Jesus? Multitudes followed Him from all the

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towns and villages, and thronged Him, so that He had no time to eat, no time for rest. But He used His popularity and influence for His Father's honour and glory.

He has left us an example that we should walk in His steps.

SKETCH IX.

"What think ye of Christ?" Matt. xxii. 42.

THIS was a question asked by our Lord Himself.

Note. I do not ask you to gaze on a *dead* Christ.

What think you of a *living* Christ?

It is a blessed truth that Christ died; and a glorious truth that He rose from the dead. "I am He that liveth and was dead. Behold, I live for evermore."

See the importance of this truth.

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Without atonement there is no salvation.

But without resurrection there could be no atonement.

These two truths are inseparable, 1 Cor. xv. 12—19.

Let us review for a moment the events which establish these two facts.

Jesus died on the cross for us. He was really dead; a loving disciple begs His body, takes it down from the cross, lays it in a new tomb hewn out of a rock; there was therefore only one entrance into it. David had said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." Jesus had said that He would rise again on the third day. The chief priests and Pharisees remembered that He had spoken these words; they obtained authority for a guard of 60 men, sealing the stone to make it sure. All in vain.

The fact of His resurrection was attested by many witnesses.

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He was seen by above five hundred brethren at once. His disciples and the women saw Him. He talked and eat with His disciples. It was further confirmed by His ascension to heaven in the presence of several witnesses.

Oh! what think you of a *living* Christ? what know you of His grace and power? what is He to you? What know you of His intercession? and of the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost whom He sent down to apply His work to your souls?

In Him surely "Mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Have you accepted the *risen* Christ, God's certificate of your pardon, your justification, the living ascended Saviour, who is at God's right hand in heaven? What do you "who were dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh" know of being "quickened together with Him"?

What know you of a *living Christ energizing in you* by His risen life?

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The telegraph is wonderful in its power of transmitting messages thousands of miles off.

What know you of Christ's far more wondrous power over your heart, giving it a power to live a new life, so that, like Paul, you can say, "Yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me," Gal. ii. 20.

SKETCH X.

"God is love."—1 John iv. 16.

GOD'S character is beautifully brought out in these words. It is not written, "God is angry, and has to be appeased," but, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet *sinners*, Christ died for us."

And yet, God has not overthrown His justice,

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but has maintained it, as it is written, "Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

I. *God loved us when we were yet sinners, enemies, unreconciled.* Rebellious, would not have Him to reign over us; "neither was there any days-man betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both," Job ix. 33.

II. *He planned the means for our reconciliation, for we could not.* "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." "Now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometime were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ," "for He is our peace." "Through Him we both [Jew and Gentile] have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

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III. *The blessings of reconciliation are manifold.* "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God," Eph. ii. 19. "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus," Eph. ii. 5—7.

IV. *Who are invited to be reconciled?* Those "without strength," "the ungodly," "sinners," "enemies," Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.

V. *No room for doubting.* God Himself *beseeches us.* Christ invites us. Oh what marvel! wonderful! One can understand a poor sinner beseeching God for mercy. But it is beyond all through the grace of God, who beseeches sinners. "Be ye reconciled." Well might we sing.

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VI. *Terms of reconciliation.* Accept, receive, come, lay down arms of rebellion, believe, "look at Me, and be ye saved."

VII. *Time.* Now, to-day. During sixteen years eight thousand persons of all ages have been laid in our cemetery. Is there time for delay? It is dangerous. It may cost you your soul. Come at once, to-morrow may be too late.

SKETCH XI.

AN ADDRESS ON THE WORLD'S GREAT SATURDAY NIGHT.

I. *The Paymaster.*
II. *The Workers.*
III. *The Wages.*

I. *The Paymaster.* The Lord Jesus Christ is the great Paymaster; He calls the workers into His vineyard, and is their Lord. He was once despised and rejected. He was once a prisoner at the bar. He is King of kings, and Lord of lords,

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and His ways are equal. He is not unrighteous to forget any work or labour done by any of the workers. He will pay "according to their works." He has wonderful rewards to give. And His wrath who can endure? Who is a good workman? one who uses his proper tools. A Christian's tools are the word of God and prayer. You will never find him complaining of these tools, for he knows how to use them. He will be known by the faithfulness with which he uses these tools, and by his love to his Master, and he will be kind and obliging to his fellow-workmen, and explain to them the benefit of these tools. Such a workman will give up everything the Master abhors. He will economize his time, knowing it is not his own, but the Master's. He will serve Him faithfully, zealously, and lovingly. He will turn to good account everything in the Master's vineyard, and will waste nothing. A bad workman is known by his slothfulness, carelessness, bad habits, drunkenness, evil words, discontent, disobedience.

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III. *The wages are different.* To the good workman it is a "crown of life." The gift of God is eternal life; but to each of the good workmen "a crown of life" is promised. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne."

But what of the bad workman? It is written, "The wages of sin are death." Which are you? The day shall declare which our work is, for by their fruit ye shall know them.

SKETCH XII.

SELF-EXAMINATION.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"—2 Cor. xiii. 5.

IT is good to ask ourselves the following questions:—

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Are we building on a safe foundation? Do we hold the truth as we have received it from God? Do we expose error? Are we true believers? and are we followers of Christ? Do we exercise faith in Christ, witnessing for Him by our life and conversation before the world? Do we desire to spend and be spent for Him? Is He really our Lord and Master? Are we living in obedience to His commands? Are we only resting on Him for salvation? Paul says, "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." "Christ dwelleth in you, except ye be reprobates" [rejected, not approved]. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

We may all know, by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, whether we are Christ's. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit

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that we are the children of God." "I know," says Paul, "whom I have believed," &c. St John says, "We *know we have passed* from death unto life, *because we love the brethren.*" "He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witness in himself." "He that hath the Son hath eternal life."

We must not *rest* in good works, they are only the *evidence* of faith; as Paul says, "It is not I that live, but Christ liveth in me," and God loves to honour those who are loving, obedient children. "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye *know* that your labour is not in vain in the Lord;" and, "God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints," &c.

What is self-examination? The calling of ourselves to strict account for all the actions of our lives, comparing them with the word of God. It is a duty constantly urged upon us.

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How ought we to examine ourselves? Deliberately, frequently, impartially, diligently, wisely, with an earnest desire for amendment.

Our examination ought to be *minute* and *particular*.

Why ought we to examine ourselves? Because by so doing faithfully, we shall search out our sins, and be separated from those practices which are offensive to God, and thus not be self-deceived about our condition.

It will enable us to perceive our omissions of duty towards God and man. It will lead us to more humiliation of heart, prayer, faith, and earnest seeking for grace, for the time to come.

It is not enough to ask ourselves whether we have been baptized; but, Are we born of the Spirit? Are we "new creatures in Christ Jesus?" Are old things passed away? Are we *growing in grace?* Are we yielding all our powers to His service? Are we walking in love?

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SKETCH XIII.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHING.

WHAT is our *power* in Sunday-school teaching? Love.

What our one *theme?* Christ.

What shall be our *aim?* The conversion of our class.

Wherein is our *strength?* Praying in the Holy Ghost.

> "'Tis Christ should be the teacher's theme
> Through symbol, type, and rite;
> The birth, the cross, the hallowed stream,
> Should all their thoughts unite."

The teachers should learn of Christ, our great Teacher, who says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." This will enable the teacher to be

PATIENT.

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Dr Arnold once lost all patience with a dull scholar, when the pupil looked up in his face, and said, "Why are you angry with me, sir? Indeed I am doing my best." Years after, the Doctor used to tell the story to his own children, and say, "I never felt so ashamed in my life; *that* look and *that* speech, I have never forgotten."

> "The gentleness of Christ. Lord, should not we,
> In teaching others, strive to act like Thee?
> Patient, not hasty, towards those who learn
> But slowly in Thy school, who seem to need
> Line upon line, before they can discern
> The hallowed lessons we so plainly read."

"Father," said a little girl, "I know some one who is like Jesus." "Do you, my dear?" said the father; "who is it?" "My teacher, father, *she is so loving*."

I will tell you where to expect a fruitful Sunday class:—where the teacher visits the absent children; is always at his post before the opening prayer; comes with the subject well prepared, with earnest prayer for a blessing to each child. I know

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such a class and such a teacher. Ten of that class are now ministers of the gospel. All was due to *prayer*.

Prayer gave John Newton and Wesley for the work of Christ. Prayer must and will prevail.

"When Sabbath's hallowed morn I greet,
What makes its sacred hours so sweet?
The hope that I this day shall meet
My class.

"When to the closet I repair
To tell my wants to Jesus there,
What is the burden of my prayer?
My class.

"*Whose* wayward footsteps give me pain?
O'er whom, still bound in Satan's chain,
Seem I to weep and pray in vain?
My class.

"May He who once for sinners died,
Who doth the ravens food provide,
Be pleased in life and death to guide
My class.

"When from life's troubled scenes at rest,
Safely I lean on Jesus' breast,
O may I meet among the blest
My class."

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THE CHILDREN'S PLEA.

"From our wretched homes we gather
In our darkness and our pain,
And our little hearts are aching,
And our eyes are dim again.
O pity us, kind teachers,
However low we be,
For Jesus loved the children,
And He died for such as we.

"Our years are passing onward;
Soon the world's wild battle-cry
Will summon us to join them,
In the fight to live or die;
Oh train us for the warfare,
Make us strong in your deep love,
For Jesus loved the children,
He is smiling from above.

"Or if we're summoned early
From the earth to pass away,
Oh, teachers, ye have taught us
How to lift our hearts and pray.
Then faint not in your mission,
For a holy work is given,
And Jesus loved the children:
May we meet Him soon in heaven."

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SKETCH XIV.

MEDITATION AND ITS USES.

WHAT is meditation?

It is such an application of the mind to the consideration of any subject, for instance, in religious subjects, such as our Saviour's life, sufferings, and death, or any truth contained in the Scriptures, as shall best dispose us firmly to believe in these truths, to embrace them heartily and vigorously, to live them out in our daily walk and conversation.

Meditation is useful in exciting holy motions in our souls, when we seek the Holy Ghost's blessing on the consideration of whatever subject we take.

And indeed without meditation, the reading of the Holy Scriptures and devout books written by men will have but little effect upon us; for it is

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only by meditation that we digest what we read, and thereby the Holy Ghost nourishes and builds up our souls.

Again, it impresses the sense of our duty upon us. Considering the frailty of our nature, and our daily converse with the objects of sense, our knowledge of Divine things would by degrees be impaired if we did not refresh it by frequent meditation and prayer.

These two should ever go hand in hand.

A man who meditates much and prays much will have a tender conscience, and fear to sin. In the noise and bustle of life we are too apt to neglect the voice of conscience (although our conscience be enlightened by the Holy Ghost), and like a faithful friend be ever ready to admonish us when erring; but when we meditate prayerfully on God's ways and our own ways, it will be difficult to reject the testimony which conscience offers; for it will tell us when we are acting in conformity to the will of God, or reproach us

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for whatever omissions of duty we have been guilty.

Meditation habituates our minds to spiritual things. The daily necessities of our bodies call for constant care and application, and God has thought fit that it should be our duty to provide for them. But it is not reasonable that they should engross all our time, and take up all the vigour of our minds. We have a better part, infinitely more worth our care, which, if it is ever to attain the happiness which is prepared for it, must now converse with God in spirit and in truth. And it must be fitted and prepared for *spiritual* enjoyment, and fellowship with holy beings, in God's heavenly kingdom; and therefore meditation is necessary and proper to train us up for that holy society we expect to meet and dwell with hereafter, and this is composed of those who whilst on earth were men of prayer, study of God's word, and who loved to meditate thereon.

Meditation is a delightful employment. David

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thought so, as the Psalms abundantly testify: "My meditation of Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord," Ps. civ. 34. "Oh how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day long," Ps. cxix. 96. "Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors," Ps. cxix. 24.

"Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide."

God says to Joshua, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and thou shalt have good success," Josh. i. 8.

Paul's instructions to Timothy were, "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all," 1 Tim. iv. 15.

THE END.

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